

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF UNDERGROUND COAL MINES OF SIDULI COLLIERY UNDER EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED AT KENDA AREA, P.O.-BAHULA, P.S.-ANDAL, DIST.-BURDWAN, W.B. HELD ON 04.10.2007 AT ANDAL PANCHAYAT SAMITY OFFICE, DIST.-BURDWAN, W.B.

M/s. Eastern Coalfields Limited submitted an application to West Bengal Pollution Control Board for conducting Public Hearing for the proposed expansion of underground coal mines of production capacity 1000TPD (0.3 million tones per annum) of Siduli Colliery at Kenda Area, P.O.-Bahula, P.S.-Andal, Dist.-Burdwan, West Bengal. As per the EIA notification S.O. 1533 dated 14th September, 2006 of the MoEF, Govt. of India, Environment Clearance of the said project is required to be obtained from the MoEF, Govt. of India after conducting Public Hearing.

Accordingly, West Bengal Pollution Control Board after observing all formalities, hold the public hearing on 4th October, 2007 at 11.00 Hrs. at Andal Panchayat Samity office, Dist.-Burdwan. The Panel Members were present in the hearing. A considerable gathering was also present in the hearing. List of the panel members and the others present in the public hearing are enclosed.

The hearing started with a welcome note from Sri S. Chatterjee, Additional District Magistrate(Dev.), Burdwan who presided over the hearing. Dr. T. K. Gupta, Senior Environmental Engineer & Incharge – Consent Cell, WBPCB explained about the provisions of the above stated MoEF notification. The ADM then requested the Project Proponent to explain the details about the proposed underground coal mining project for the benefit of the panel members and others present in the hearing.

Project Proponent (PP) then explained about the project by Power Point presentation emphasizing on the likely environmental impacts arising out of the same as well as the proposed pollution abatement measures to be taken by them.

During the discussion the panel members and the others present in the public hearing made queries / suggestions with respect to the proposed project which are noted below:

Sri C. S. Banerjee, local resident welcomed the proposed expansion of underground coal mining project of Siduli Colliery, an unit of ECL with the expectation that the ECL authorities will implement their commitments for better environmental management. However, he has requested the PP to look in to the following issues.

- Despatch of coal through nearby Nagkajora Railway Siding (close to Siduli U.G. Mines) instead of road transportation to far away railway siding at Bahula.
- Provision of adequate potable water supply in the local community.
- Adequate measures should be taken to reduce dust emission during transportation of coal.
- Implementation of appropriate mine closure plan for the existing abandoned coal mines.
- Regular monitoring for environmental parameters of the project.

Sri Dilip Kumar Banerjee, representative of CITU mentioned the necessity of such expansion project of M/s. ECL at Siduli to cope up the present demand of the country. He has also requested the PP to identify possible critical villages which may face adverse impact due to mining activities in nearby area particularly about Mukundapur Village. Further he mentioned that the PP should look after the following issues.

- Development of relationship between the ECL authority and local community.
- Involvement of local people should be encouraged as far as practicable.

Sri Dinesh Maji also requested the PP to transport the coal to the siding through shortest route to minimize the dust emission in the locality. He also requested that the PP should implement the proposal strictly as made in the draft EIA.

Sri Santanu Barui, resident of Siduli Village mentioned that the report of health status mentioned in the EIA report is inadequate and this should be reviewed. He requested that the vehicles should be covered during transportation of sand or coal. Local ponds need to be improved for better use by the local community. The PP should look into the supply of safe drinking water to the local residents.

Sri Debarshi Sinha requested that the ECL authority should strengthen the existing water supply facility in consultation with District Administration and local Panchayat.

Sri Prabhat Roy, representative of AITUC also welcomed such project. He has also categorically mentioned about the despatch of coal through Nagkajora railway siding, environmental management of Dompura of Siduli Village and strengthening of water supply scheme of Kalajharia.

Sri R. C. Singh, Member Burdwan Zilla Parishad express that the expansion of Siduli Colliery is urgently needed. This will help the development of socio economic condition of Andal area of Burdwan District. However, he has mentioned that the ECL authorities should look into the environmental improvement issues related to UG coal mining operations in Andal areas.

On behalf of the project proponent Sri V. S. Ram, Agent, Siduli Colliery and Sri A. Chatterjee, GM (Civil & Environment), ECL have appreciated the various issues expressed by the different participants and welcomed the suggestions. Sri Ram categorically mentioned that they have already exploring the possibility for despatch of coal through Nagkajora Siding but it requires clearances from the Railway Authorities. They also informed that the issues raised by the various participants will be addressed adequately before finalizing the Environmental Management Plan.

The Additional District Magistrate (Dev.), Burdwan emphasized that all possible measures should be ensured by the project proponent towards mitigation of all environmental hazards and various points raised by the public present in the Hearing. In general the public present in the Hearing welcomed the project, incorporating the issues mentioned above by the Project Proponent.

Sd/-
Dr. T. K. Gupta
Senior Environmental Engineer &
Inchrge – Consent Cell, WBPCB

Sd/-
S. Chatterjee
Additional District Magistrate (Dev.)
Dist.-Burdwan