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Protesters Bail Set a \$100,00 for Protesting at Massey

Energy Madison, W.Va. – 5/18/10—Emma Kate Martin and Benjamin Bryant were arrested this morning while blockading the driveway to Massey Energy’s regional headquarters in Boone county, W.Va. Magistrate Snodgrass set their bails at \$100,000 each for misdemeanor charges of trespassing, conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor, obstructing an officer, and littering.

Nick Martin, EmmaKate’s older brother and participant in Climate Ground Zero’s campaign of civil resistance, stated “As I hugged my little sister following her arraignment this morning, I was awed by her calmness and high spirits. I admire her courage, and her willingness to put her freedom on the line for the well being of Appalachian communities and the environment. I will worry about her constantly until she is free. My sister is my hero!” EmmaKate Martin was perched on a platform suspended in a tripod, a structure built with rope and three log poles, and Bryant was locked to the base of a pole.

Both Martin and Bryant underwent extensive non-violence training prior to their action. Their banner read “Massey, Profits Before People & Mountains, Fight Back!”

They articulated their motives and the sense of responsibility that impelled them to act in an open letter to Massey shareholders and the American public. The letter can be read at www.climategroundzero.org/openletter.

Among their top concerns are mountaintop removal and the Brushy Fork Sludge Impoundment on Coal River Mountain. Climate Ground Zero’s legal team is researching the legality of the unprecedentedly high bail and will seek legal recourse.

“Boone county is not giving these bails to simply punish EmmaKate and Ben. Boone county, and the state of West Virginia, is using high bail as an intimidation tactic to deter others from standing up for the health of communities and against mountaintop removal and Massey’s mistreatment of workers,” stated Sarah Seeds veteran non-violent activist.

“There is an emerging pattern of non-violent protesters receiving heavy-handed punishment while those who use violence against them are let off the hook.

On July 4, 2009, on Kayford Mountain, Adam Pauley threatened to kill families who had gathered to celebrate Independence Day at the Mountain Keepers Festival. He was not arrested, but was given a \$100 fine and six months unsupervised when found guilty of verbal assault in a February 2010 trial brought against him by Mountain Keeper Larry Gibson. Rock Creek resident, Ruth Tucker, slapped Judy Bonds, outspoken mountaintop removal abolitionist, at a non-violent protest on June 23, 2009. She was released on personal recognizance and given a \$100 fine six months after the fact. Climate Ground Zero activist, Jacqueline Quimby was recently sentenced to sixty days in jail for an act of non-violent civil disobedience at a Kanawha County mine site.