

## Letter of Protest

February 4, 2003

Mr. Leslie Moonves  
CBS Television City  
7800 W. Beverly Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Dear Mr. Moonves:

I am writing on behalf of the Appalachian Studies Association to protest your network's decision to air a new reality series entitled the "Real Beverly Hillbillies." The ASA is an organization of 100 institutions and 600 scholars, students, and activists that seeks to understand the social, economic, cultural, and historical developments in the upland region of the southern and eastern states of the United States. We have found that one of the major barriers to improvement in the lives of the millions of people in the region is the pernicious effect of the stereotype of the hillbilly.

We would ask that CBS and its advertisers reconsider the decision to air the "Real Beverly Hillbillies." The premise of the show is fatally flawed. Rather than offering an opportunity to view the superficiality of "Hollywood" that was the staple of the original series, CBS and the new program's producers have set out to exploit the so-called social inadequacies of a rural family. While this family selected for the program will receive substantial financial rewards, many other rural and mountain families will be humiliated. This will be especially true for our young people who already have a difficult time establishing a positive identity for themselves.

We will be meeting at our annual conference in March at Eastern Kentucky University. We would welcome the chance to start a dialogue with CBS about the show at that time. I would be willing to set up an open meeting during the conference that would facilitate that discussion. Please contact me at your convenience if you or any member of your staff would be interested in joining this conversation.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and professional courtesy.

Sincerely,

Gordon B. McKinney  
President  
Appalachian Studies Association