



January 16, 2008

*Support the S-Miner Act*

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) I urge you to support H.R. 2768, the Supplemental Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act ("S-MINER Act") when the House considers this bill today. This legislation will provide the nation's mine workers critically important health and safety protections designed to prevent crippling diseases and injuries.

The nation's transportation workers have long supported the economic and safety and health needs of America's mine workers. Employees in the freight rail industry understand that coal mining operations are an important source of freight rail business and thus job creation. They also understand that a strong and successful coal industry must also provide a safe workplace for the nation's miners.

The S-MINER Act builds on the MINER Act, which passed in 2006 after several multi-fatal coal mining accidents graphically demonstrated severe shortcomings in the response to mine emergencies. While the MINER Act focused on what occurred after an accident, H. R. 2768 is intended to help prevent accidents and illnesses from arising in the first place.

The S-MINER Act is the first piece of legislation in over 30 years – since enactment of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (Mine Act) – to focus on preventing mining accidents and illnesses. Among the numerous measures included in this bill are several designed to protect miners from the dangers associated with retreat mining – the mining procedure in use at the Crandall Canyon mine where tragedy struck in June 2007. It also provides for reduced exposures to the deadly coal dust that causes pneumoconiosis, and provides an on-going process for updating exposure limits for harmful and toxic substances commonly used in the mining process. Further, the legislation incorporates many key recommendations recently issued by the independent Technical Study Panel, a creation of the 2006 MINER Act.

The mine workers that keep our country moving need your help now, before we bear witness to even more needless disasters. I urge you to support this legislation when it comes before the House of Representatives. If made in order, I also urge you to support the Manager's amendment to the bill and oppose any motion to recommit which will delay action on this critically needed safety and health legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind", written over a horizontal line.

Edward Wytkind  
President

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

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