



March 31, 2020

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Mr. David G. Zatezalo, Assistant Secretary  
Mine Safety and Health Administration  
Room 5C330  
201 12<sup>th</sup> Street South  
Arlington, VA 22202-5452

RE: Support for specific safeguards and precautionary measures to protect miners from COVID-19

Dear Mr. Zatezalo:

Due to the public health crisis created by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the health care system in many parts of the country nears a breaking point. In an effort to stem the growth in COVID-19 cases, three-fourths of the American public have been urged to stay at home, including orders in the coal mining states of Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Colorado, and New Mexico. Truly, the current pandemic is of a magnitude not experienced in any of our lifetimes.

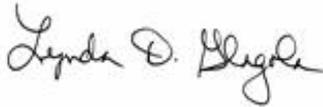
While widespread orders to stay at home are in place, mining continues as an essential function in America's economy. Miners, unable to work from home and limit their contact with non-household members, are therefore at increased risk of COVID-19 infection.

As you are aware, miners frequently position themselves in close proximity to one another and share equipment in the course of their work duties. Due to the highly contagious nature of COVID-19, one miner with the infection can potentially spread the virus to many others. Not only do the resulting illnesses keep the infected miners from working, but they also put affected mines at risk for temporary closure to reduce further transmission of disease.

MSHA currently provides guidance on practices for mine operators and miners to address COVID-19 on its website ("MSHA Response to COVID-19" at <https://www.msha.gov/msha-response-covid-19>). The recommended actions for avoiding close contact and for disinfection are useful. However, more comprehensive safeguards and protective standards are needed urgently to mitigate the risk of disease in mines across the country. We therefore wish to express our agreement with and support for the

letter from Mr. Cecil Roberts, President of the United Mine Workers of America, dated March 24, 2020. Taking this more robust approach will do more to prevent COVID-19 infection in mines, keeping them open and operating, and reduce the risk of adding to the burden on the critically overtaxed health care system.

Sincerely,



Lynda D. Glagola  
President  
National Coalition of Black Lung and Respiratory  
Disease Clinics



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