

Remarks by Reece Maggard, Scotia Employees Association  
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Good afternoon,

My name is Reece Maggard. I have been working in the coal industry since 1974 – history.

Presently, I am President of Scotia Employees Association (SEA); a union representing the hourly employees at C.R.C.C. with about 175 people. The reason I am here is to give my views on the discussion of drug and alcohol abuse in the coal industry, from the view of miners or its representative, on the subject.

The company I work for has had a very good drug and alcohol program [discuss more] but there came a situation where the company was having some complaints concerning 3 employees. This complaint went to the federal inspectors so by policy they had to check the complaint. The way it was done, they came, pulled the 3 out of work and took them for drug testing. All tests came back negative. If the complaint would have been investigated in the manner the complaint was filed it was impossible for it to be true. This gets into a position that I and a lot of miners don't agree because it is a very embarrassing and potentially damaging process. So this was brought up to the company wanting to bring in random testing. Thurman Holcomb, Mine Manager at CRCC, asked my opinion. Of course our concern was that it would be equal and just for all – as well as subjecting company employees to the same policy that no one would be harassed or discriminated against. With the situation in the U.S. today, drug & alcohol abuse is a very hot & opinionated issue in our times, whether it's concerning elected officials, celebrity and media personnel, sports heroes, teens, or workplace. My discussion is from a miner's view and not to debate the positions that can be made on legal, illegal; right, wrong; okay, not okay, government

view for debate of IRS or cost etc. Debate in America is something that we are in lack of. Just turn on any t.v. show or news cast there will be 2 individuals in debate on any subject. Experts in their field arguing pro/con. So I limit my opinion to abuse on the job.

Abuse in our area of this country is a very well known issue. There probably is not a home in the region that's not been affected one way or another.

The number one thing I think we all can agree on is that no one wants someone inebriated working by them in a coal mine environment. So again I look at this issue from the miners' view of safety on the job. I don't know if it's because we have the union environment or the age group of people we work with but as I said in the beginning of the CRCC drug & alcohol program I don't think or know that we had a problem or do have a problem. I won't say that maybe someone doesn't have a problem but with the company's policy and the men in the education and safety talks concerning substance abuse works. The policy is if anyone has a problem they can get help anonymously with no recourse of firing (without being brought to everyone's attention). My experience has been that a major addiction problem does not remain a company problem long but a legal, court's or welfare's problem. The policy at the CRCC is if anyone comes to work with reason [warranted for small speech etc.] they will be sent for a drug or alcohol test and if tested positive, lose their job.

