



News Release

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Stickler Appointed to Lead Mine Safety and Health Administration

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao welcomed today’s announcement that President George W. Bush has appointed Richard E. Stickler of West Virginia to serve as the assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. This critical worker safety and health position was vacant since November 2004, but Stickler’s nomination never received a confirmation vote in the U.S. Senate.

“We appreciate that Congress gave MSHA new tools to protect miners through the MINER Act, and now we have the expert who best knows how to use those tools,” Secretary Chao said. “Richard has extensive experience in mining and protecting miners’ lives that he will use to strengthen enforcement of mine safety laws and help ensure the safety and health of miners nationwide.”

Prior to his nomination, Stickler was director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Deep Mine Safety from 1997 to 2003. Mine Safety and Health Administration data show mine injuries in the state decreased and state data also confirm that injury rates fell and enforcement activity increased during his tenure as director. Stickler has more than 37 years of mining experience, including management of underground and surface operations. Stickler began his career as a coal miner, captain of a mine rescue team, and shift foreman, working his way up the ladder to superintendent and mine manager.

Stickler was one of the architects of the dramatic rescue of nine miners at the Quecreek Mine in Pennsylvania in 2002 when he served as a planner and decision-maker at the mine site command center during the entire rescue operation.

As the head of MSHA, Stickler will be responsible for administering the new MINER Act approved by Congress, which requires the agency to issue new regulations and adopt new strategies for protecting miners’ lives.

A native of West Virginia, Stickler received a bachelor of science degree in general engineering from Fairmont State University in 1968 and is certified as a mine safety professional by the International Society of Mine Safety Professionals.

President Bush nominated Stickler on Sept. 15, 2005, to be assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.

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