
From: hannah.morgan@apps.sierraclub.org [mailto:hannah.morgan@apps.sierraclub.org] **On**
Behalf Of Morgan, Hannah 2011 MAY -3 P 5:04
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 4:13 PM
To: zzMSHA-Standards - Comments to Fed Reg Group
Cc: Janet Keating; vernoncrmw@gmail.com; clrank@hughes.net; debbiejarrell@gmail.com; Sam;
kate@appvoices.org; info@heartwood.org; katey lauer; sandra@appvoices.org
Subject: Re: RIN 1219-AB64" Black Lung Comments

RE: RIN 1219 – AB64

**COMMENT ON MSHA’S PROPOSED RULE TO LOWER
MINERS’ EXPOSURE TO RESPIRABLE COAL MINE DUST**

MSHA’s proposed rule renews a much needed focus on the elimination of black lung disease. This is a very important issue. MSHA should implement the rule as speedily as possible. The 1995 NIOSH Criteria Document recommended a reduction in the allowable amount of respirable dust to 1 mg/cubic meter as called for in the rule. In the 16 years since NIOSH published its recommended standard there has been an alarming increased incidence of coal workers’ pneumoconiosis among coal miners in Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Tennessee and Pennsylvania.

These miners have been injured due to breathing coal mine dust. They are short of breath and unable to enjoy and their lives have been changed severely due to working in excessive dust. Their ability to support their families was wiped out and they are now dependent on compensation and disability benefits to get by. Their income is half what they had earned. Black lung has deprived them of a normal and productive life. They cannot do simple chores such as cutting the grass. They cannot take a walk. Black lung has ruined their health. It has changed the lives of their families.

The 1969 Coal Mine Act was intended to eliminate black lung by reducing the amount of dust that miners breathed. The law stated that the government should establish limits reducing the amount of dust in the mines to a level of personal exposure which will prevent new incidences of respiratory disease and the further development of such disease. The law stated that it intended to ensure that the working conditions in coal mines were sufficiently free of dust in the mine atmosphere to permit each miner the opportunity to work during the period of his entire adult working life without incurring any disability from 'black lung' disease or any other occupation-related disease. We have not succeeded in this effort.

We are encouraged that MSHA has a renewed dedication to eliminating black lung. Miners are entitled to work in a safe and healthy work environment. Miners should be able to work in an environment where they are not at risk for developing an incurable disease.

Sincerely,

Coal River Mountain Watch

AB64 - COMM - 39

*PO Box 651
Whitesville, WV 25209*

Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
PO Box 6753
Huntington, WV 25773-6753.

Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards
PO Box 905,
Appalachia, VA 24216

WV Highlands Conservancy
HC 78 Box 227
Rock Cave, WV 26234

Appalachian Voices
191 Howard St, Boone, NC 28607

Heartwood Forest Council
P.O. Box 538
Gosport, IN 47433

Alliance for Appalachia
PO Box 11701
Charleston, WV 25339

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Hannah Morgan

Field Organizer in Southwest Virginia Coalfields
Sierra Club
302 Spring Ave SE
Wise, VA 24293
276-494-5686 (w)

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Hannah Morgan

Field Organizer in Southwest Virginia Coalfields
Sierra Club
302 Spring Ave SE

Wise, VA 24293
276-494-5686 (w)