Patriot Coal Corporation
600 Laidley Tower
Charleston, West Virginia 25324
304.344.0300
www.patriotcoal.com

January 8, 2009

Ms. Patrica W. Silvey
MSHA, Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances
1100 Wilson Boulevard, Room 2350
Arlington, VA 22209- 3939

Re: December 12, 2008 Mine Communications and Tracking Draft Program Policy Letter No. P08-

Dear Ms. Silvey;

I respectfully submit the following comments regarding the "December 12, 2008, Mine Communications and Tracking Systems, MSHA Draft Program Policy Letter No. P08-".

My comments are blue italic below. In general, I support the proposed program policy letter, but seek a clearer understanding of the two following paragraphs and subparagraphs:

Two-Way Communication System

2. Coverage Area
a. The system must provide coverage for each working section in a mine including all intersections.
b. The system also generally should provide continuous coverage along the escapeways and a coverage zone both inby and outby strategic areas of the mine, such as belt drives and transfer points, power centers, loading points, refuge alternatives, SCSR caches and other areas identified by the District Manager. While a coverage zone of 200 feet inby and 200 feet outby strategic areas normally should be adequate, the District Manager may require longer or shorter distances given circumstances specific to the mine.

2.a. Coverage Area: Requiring coverage in "all intersections" on a mining section that is 10 to 12 enties wide poses an extreme hardship on maintaining communications in all intersections, where typically there would be 5 crosscuts to the tailpiece or feeder. This would require maintaining communications at 50 plus intersections. Even is three entry section, maintaining communications in the first open crosscut would be difficult and at what point would communications be required.

COMM-27

2.b. Clearification is required to understand the intent and coverage required at strategic areas listed in the mine.

Electronic Tracking System

2. Coverage Area

a. The system must provide coverage for each working section in a mine including all intersections.

b. The system also generally should provide continuous coverage along the escapeways and a coverage zone both inby and outby strategic areas of the mine, such as belt drives and transfer points, power centers, loading points, refuge alternatives, SCSR caches and other areas identified by the District Manager. While a coverage zone of 200 feet inby and 200 feet outby strategic areas normally should be adequate, the District Manager may require longer or shorter distances given circumstances specific to the mine.

i. The District Manager may approve alternative coverage areas to those areas identified in 2(b), such as adjacent entries, for reasons such as radio frequency interference or other factors that may reduce the coverage area at the identified strategic areas.

ii. Miners should follow an established check-in/check-out procedure or an equivalent procedure when assigned to work in bleeders or other remote areas of the mine that are not provided with communications coverage.

2.a. Coverage Area: Requiring coverage in "all intersections" on a mining section that is 10 to 12 entries wide poses an extreme hardship on maintaining tracking in all intersections, where typically there would be 5 crosscuts to the tailpiece or feeder. This would require maintaining communications at 50 plus intersections. Even is three entry section, maintaining tracking in the first open crosscut would be difficult and at what point would tracking be required.

2.b. Clearification is required to understand the intent and coverage required at strategic areas listed in the mine.

Sincerely,
Frank Peduti
Director Maintenance Services
Patriot Coal Corp.