

United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Contacts:

ENZI: Craig Orfield (202) 224-6770

HATCH: Mark Eddington (202) 224-5251

***ENZI, HATCH, ISAKSON: CRANDALL CANYON INVESTIGATION MUST
BE COMPLETED BY MINE SAFETY EXPERTS***

- AWAIT OFFICAL REPORTS ON ACCIDENT -

Washington – Three top members of the Senate committee that governs mine safety today said federal investigators conducting a thorough investigation of the Crandall Canyon Mine tragedy must be allowed to complete their work, and urged Congress to refrain from rushing to judgments based on incomplete and unofficial evidence.

Senator Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Ranking Member of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) and Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), both senior members of the HELP Committee, said they will await the nonpartisan, official findings of the investigation under way by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and the Department of Labor's Inspector General before reaching conclusions about the accident.

"Mine safety is too important an issue to risk misunderstandings about highly technical data prepared by non-experts," the Senators said Thursday, following Chairman Kennedy's release of a report on the accident - prepared by members of his HELP Committee staff.

"We must continue to work together in a bipartisan process to ensure that the tragedy suffered at the Crandall Canyon Mine in Utah will be thoroughly examined to determine if anything could have been done to avoid this disaster, and ensure greater mine safety for the future," the Senators said.

Senator Hatch added: "I appreciate Chairman Kennedy's interest in the mining disaster that occurred in my home state of Utah. His report is one of a number of inquiries that will shed light on the Crandall Canyon Mine tragedy. I will weigh the opinions in his inquiry with the official findings in the Inspector General's and Mine Safety and Health Administration's official reports that are due to be released later this year. I'll further examine the findings in all the other ongoing reports on Crandall Canyon.

"I commend the mining communities in Emery County that were impacted by the disaster for continuing to provide their vital service, and we grieve for the families and friends of the nine

lost miners. Although we may never make mining completely safe, we must do all that we can to make mining safer. I was pleased to work with Senators Kennedy, Enzi and others to pass the “MINER Act of 2006”, and call on the federal government to speedily implement all of the reforms prescribed in that law.

“Meanwhile, while we await full implementation of the 2006 law, we need to ensure we have all the facts before enacting additional mine-safety regulations that may not address the real problems or prescribe the right solutions.”

Senator Enzi said: “The Crandall Canyon Mine tragedy deserves a thorough, non-political investigation, and appropriate action if warranted. We must determine how this accident could have been avoided, and how the rescue efforts could have been better managed. We can honor those whose lives have been lost by acting to ensure that the tragedy will not be repeated.”

“While we work to prevent another tragedy like this in the future, it’s important to recognize that not every accident requires a legislative solution. As we strive to improve mine safety, we must gather all the facts before we determine what course to take.”

Senator Isakson said: “We have made great progress over the last few years, and we will continue to work towards the day that every miner returns home to the arms of their loved ones safely. We know the federal government’s best mine safety experts are located at the Department of Labor. We trust them to do a full, complete and independent investigation of the tragedy at Crandall Canyon Mine just as they did after the Sago disaster in West Virginia.”

###