



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI: MINER ACT A SUCCESS,
BUT WE CAN NEVER BE COMPLACENT***

Washington, DC – Two years after Congress passed the “Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act” (MINER Act), U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), said the law has significantly improved mine safety and includes provisions that will continue to make mining safer in the future.

“The MINER Act has made our nation’s mines much safer over the past two years, but we can never be complacent when it comes to mine safety,” Enzi said. “The MINER Act ensures that as new technologies and better products become available, underground coal mines must keep pace and utilize them.”

Enzi said that the MINER Act established a system that actually reevaluates itself. Twice a year, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) now reviews each underground coal mine’s Emergency Response Plan to ensure that the mine is using the most effective rescue and accident communication technology.

“Scientists, government experts, mine operators and miners are working together to ensure that state of the art technology and safety plans are in place. Because of the MINER Act, we now have new breathable air devices available for 200,000 of our nation’s miners. MSHA is training 45 new rescue teams. We have required that mine seals like the one that failed at Sago be twice as strong. Mine operators have laid new communication lines, and MSHA is working with innovators all across the country to evaluate, approve, and implement new wireless communication and tracking systems.”

In response to the accidents in West Virginia and Kentucky in 2006, the HELP Committee, under Senator Enzi’s chairmanship, worked across party lines to enact the first mining reforms in 28 years. Most of the MINER Act’s reforms were still going into effect when the tragic accident at the Crandall Canyon mine in Utah occurred last summer, but the law is now almost fully implemented.

“Without a doubt, our nation’s mines are much safer than they were two years ago,” Enzi said. “Now that the regulations, training requirements, and equipment upgrades are in place, we need to continue to look at the safety conditions miners face

every day when they go to work. We must do all we can to prevent any more tragic accidents from occurring.”

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