



# Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Senator Mary Jo White  
Chairman

*Patrick Henderson, Executive Director*

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January 5, 2006

The Honorable Kathleen A. McGinty  
Secretary of Environmental Protection  
16<sup>th</sup> Floor Rachel Carson Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Secretary McGinty:

Without question, all Pennsylvanians join in mourning the tragic loss of life in the recent deep mining disaster in Tallmansville, West Virginia. Despite this tragedy, the assistance offered by Pennsylvania mine safety officials was crucial and no doubt provided vital support to the rescue effort. The Department's efforts are to be commended.

As you know well, the 2002 Quecreek mine accident and subsequent investigation led for numerous calls for changes to Pennsylvania's mine safety law. Former Governor Schweiker urged Governor Rendell to make this a key priority for his Administration, outlining over twenty specific suggested changes to Pennsylvania's Bituminous Coal Mine Act.

Along these lines, it is my understanding that Senator Kasunic has recently introduced Senate Bill 949 at the request of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Additionally, significant discussions have occurred over the past two years between the Pennsylvania Coal Association and the United Mine Workers Association. The purpose of this correspondence is to urge DEP to make improvements to our deep mine safety law a priority. To that end, a summary of the changes included in SB 949, and an understanding of how DEP feels these changes will improve mine safety, would be appreciated. I am convinced that if we work together to make this a priority, future tragedies and loss of life can be averted.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jo White".

Mary Jo White, Chairman  
Senate Environmental Resources  
& Energy Committee

cc: Senator David J. Brightbill  
Senator Robert J. Mellow  
Senator Raphael J. Musto  
Senator Richard A. Kasunic  
Representative Samuel H. Smith  
Representative William F. Adolph, Jr.  
Representative H. William DeWeese  
Representative Camille George