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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

<http://help.senate.gov>

August 27, 2007

The Honorable Gordon S. Heddell
Inspector General
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Inspector General Heddell:

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (hereinafter "the Committee") is examining the circumstances surrounding the August 6, 2007, tragedy and accidents at Crandall Canyon mine in Huntington, Utah.

As Ranking Member and senior Members of the Committee with jurisdiction over the Department of Labor and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), we are requesting the Office of Inspector General to conduct a thorough review of MSHA's oversight of the Crandall Canyon mine. Specifically, we are interested in the effectiveness of MSHA's oversight of the commencement of retreat mining and information about MSHA's knowledge and reaction to changes in mine conditions between August 2006 and the present. Further, we are interested in what role and what effect the new Office of Accountability had with regard to the Crandall Canyon mine. In addition, please address the number and nature of the citations, if any, issued to Crandall Canyon by MSHA from August 2006 to the present and describe any follow-up action by MSHA to ensure the safety of the mine. Finally, we would appreciate your observations with regard to the implications of what happened at Crandall Canyon for other mines throughout the United States. It would assist us to have your findings and recommendations on an expedited basis. Clearly, your observations, findings and recommendations with regard to MSHA's performance in this instance will be of the utmost importance to us and America's miners and their families.

MSHA has critically important responsibilities in ensuring the safety and welfare of our nation's miners. The health and safety of countless individuals is directly related to the actions of MSHA. Therefore, we appreciate your assistance in assessing MSHA's performance with regard to the Crandall Canyon mine.

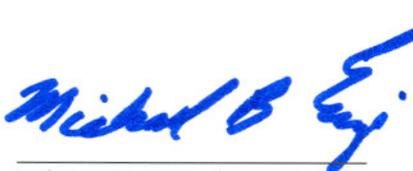
Our staff is prepared to assist you fully in your investigation. Please keep us apprised of the progress of the investigation with periodic status reports and updates, as appropriate.

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We would appreciate your expeditious review and would be pleased to discuss and refine the focus of your work further.

Thank you again for your cooperation in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us or our staff, if there are questions or if we may be of further assistance: Brian Hayes (224-6770) and Lauren Fuller (224-6770) with Senator Enzi; Chris Campbell (224-5251) with Senator Hatch; and Ed Egee (224-3643) with Senator Isakson.

Sincerely,


Michael B. Enzi


Orrin Hatch


Johnny Isakson