



For Immediate Release

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ENZI: MINER ACT IS IMPROVING MINE SAFETY, SAVING LIVES

Washington, D.C. –U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said that implementation of the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response (MINER) Act has led to improved mine safety across the country.

“Mining presents unique safety challenges,” Enzi said. “The problems are complex, the solutions varied, and the risk of unintended consequence substantial. The MINER Act, which we passed into law last year, has been successful in addressing these challenges to improve mine safety and save lives.”

“In the MINER Act, we placed an emphasis on developing practical and individual approaches that will better protect miners immediately. We also established standards that can evolve with technology, and to encourage the development of better miner-protecting technologies so that this industry will not be allowed to fall behind progress. Such approaches should continue through the regulatory process.”

Since the passage of the MINER Act, some 86,000 new self-contained self-rescue units have been placed into service, and more than 100,000 are scheduled to be added in the next few months. In addition, all of the nation’s 55,000 underground coal miners have and will continue to receive detailed training in the use of these life-saving devices. Government and the private sector are continuing their collaboration to develop and implement new safety and communication technology. All underground coal mines have been required to submit emergency response plans and have submitted plans to provide miners that are entrapped with sufficient quantities of breathable air. Mines have installed lifelines and other escape assistance. Some thirty-six new mine rescue teams have been established already, with more to come.

In January 2006, Enzi met with the families of the 12 miners killed in the January 2, 2006 explosion at Sago Mine. After returning, Enzi wrote bipartisan legislation to improve mine safety regulations and reduce safety risks for miners across the country. The result, the MINER Act of 2006, received overwhelming support in both Houses and was signed into law by President Bush in June of last year. The new law established timelines for new and better mine safety technology, required mines to maintain and

continuously update emergency response plans, and raised the criminal penalty cap as well as the maximum civil penalty for flagrant violations of the Mine Act.

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