

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

April 8, 2010

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Tonight, West Virginia is still mourning the loss of the 25 miners who died at the Upper Big Branch mine and anxiously awaiting the news of the four miners who remain unaccounted for. I commend you and your Administration for your swift response and ongoing commitment of federal resources to assist in this effort. The visit by Secretary Solis, and the continued presence of so many Department of Labor officials, is deeply appreciated.

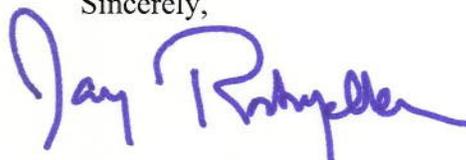
Today's announcement that federal mine safety officials will report to you next week with their initial assessment of the cause of this disaster and the actions that could prevent future tragedies is welcomed news. Even as we continue to pray for a miracle at the Upper Big Branch mine, I know that all Americans join West Virginians in wanting answers to what caused this heartbreaking loss of life.

There is no question that we must learn what contributed to this tragedy and determine what actions must be taken in order to prevent future mining fatalities. We learn from every accident, and the way we honor the sacrifice of our miners is by turning what we learn into swift action to improve safety.

As more information becomes available, I respectfully request that the West Virginia Congressional delegation receive ongoing briefings from Secretary Solis and Assistant Secretary Joe Main, including a briefing as soon as possible on their initial assessment of the causes of the Upper Big Branch mine explosion.

This massive tragedy should make America pause and reflect on the sacrifices of those who work in dangerous underground conditions to preserve America's quality of life and power nearly half of our great nation. I look forward to working with you and your Administration to promote a culture of safety, improve mine safety enforcement, and avoid the loss of life. Our nation's miners and their families deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV