

News Statement



U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Release Number: 10-490-NAT

For Immediate Release
April 15, 2010
Contact: Jesse Lawder
Phone: 202-693-4659 (office) or 202-510-8095 (cell)

Statement by US Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis regarding meeting with President Obama on West Virginia mine disaster

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis issued the following statement regarding her meeting today with President Obama on the West Virginia mine disaster:

“Over the past week, I have spent time with the families of the mine workers who were killed at the Upper Big Branch mine.

“The miners who perished were husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, nephews or a friend to someone.

“These men worked hard to put food on the table and support their families. They lived by a simple covenant: If they worked hard and did a good job, their employer would do everything necessary to maintain the highest safety standards so they could go home to their families after every shift.

“The best way that we can honor these men is for the Mine Safety and Health Administration to do its job with the utmost integrity and thoroughness. As the president has said, the Department of Labor and MSHA will be conducting a systematic and comprehensive investigation into what caused this tragedy. While this investigation is underway, we will look to strengthen enforcement of our existing laws and close loopholes that allow companies to avoid their responsibilities. I gave the president my word that this will happen. I am telling the families the same thing.

“Although details of the catastrophe are unclear at this time, we do know this: Mine explosions are preventable. Miners do not have to sacrifice their lives for their livelihood. And every miner, at every mine, after every shift, can and should come home to his or her family safe and whole.”

###

U.S. Department of Labor releases are accessible on the Internet at <http://www.dol.gov>. The information in this news release will be made available in alternate format (large print, Braille, audio tape or disc) from the COAST office upon request. Please specify which news release when placing your request at 202-693-7828 or TTY 202-693-7755. The Labor Department is committed to providing America’s employers and employees with easy access to understandable information on how to comply with its laws and regulations. For more information, please visit <http://www.dol.gov/compliance>.