

U. S. Department of Labor

Mine Safety and Health Administration  
100 Bluestone Road  
Mount Hope, WV 25880-1000

Denial



AUG 03 2009

Mr. Chris Blanchard  
President  
Performance Coal Company  
POB 69  
Naoma, WV 25140

Dear Mr. Blanchard:

Subject: Mine Ventilation Plan, Section 75.370, 30 CFR 75, Upper  
Big Branch Mine-South, I.D. No. 46-08436, Performance  
Coal Company, Montcoal, Raleigh County, West Virginia

This will acknowledge receipt of the 2<sup>nd</sup> submittal of a revision to the ventilation plan, dated July 17, 2009, and received by MSHA on July 20, 2009, for the subject mine. The revision requests to show the ventilation scheme for the future long wall mining and ventilation for gate road entries, cross over entries, and bleeder entries; shows the installation of a bleeder fan for the proposed Northern district bleeder system; shows the ventilation changes in the Old North Mains and Parallel North Mains areas when the bleeder fan installation is complete as shown on two (2) phase portions of the mine map, dated July 20, 2009, and submitted with the request.

The revision, as submitted, cannot be approved and is hereby denied. Please refer to the attached marked-up copy of the revision map and narrative, which notes the deficiencies found upon review.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact the Ventilation Department at (304) 877-3900/Ext. 142.

Sincerely,

/s/ ROBERT G. HARDMAN

Robert G. Hardman  
District Manager  
Coal Mine Safety and Health, District 4

Cc: Mt. Hope Field Office (3incl.)/ Files/nlc

SUPERVISORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

MAW/RR 7/31/09  
Initials MAW Date 7/31/09



AUG 03 2009

Mr. Chris Blanchard  
President  
Performance Coal Company  
POB 69  
Naoma, WV 25140

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Big Branch Mine-South, I.D. No. 46-08436, Performance  
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert G. Hardman", is written over a circular stamp.

Robert G. Hardman  
District Manager  
Coal Mine Safety and Health, District 4



# Performance Coal Company

P.O. Box 69

Naoma, WV

25140

July 17, 2009

Mr. Robert G. Hardman  
Mine Safety and Health Administration  
100 Bluestone Road  
Mount Hope, WV 25880

Re: Performance Coal Company  
Upper Big Branch Mine  
MSHA ID : 46-08436  
State ID: U-3042-92  
Ventilation Revision

Dear Sir:

Attached for your review and approval is a revision to Performance Coal Company's, Upper Big Branch Mine (46-08436).

This revision consists of two phases.

Phase one depicts the ventilation scheme during the development of the proposed Northern District coal reserves for future longwall mining and the proposed ventilation for gateroad entries, cross over entries, and bleeder entries. Also depicted in phase one is the activation of the bleeder fan for continued development and anticipated airflow directions and quantities, prior to the retreat mining of the No. 1 North Longwall Panel.

Phase two depicts the ventilation scheme for further development of the Northern Districts and the start-up and activation of the No. 1 North Longwall Panel, the establishment of bleeder evaluation check points along the active longwall face (MP's and EP's), the surface EP at the top of the Bleeder return shaft, and the necessary ventilation controls to be installed/removed to complete the change as shown on the map.

Phase one and phase two may occur concurrently provided the following precautions are followed:

- Crossover #1 will mine to within 50' of cut-through, at this time MSHA will be notified of the mining status.
- Longwall will be idled and power will be disconnected until the cut-through is completed.

Also attached is a description of the Northern District Longwall Bleeder System as shown on the Line Diagram Map and proposed evaluation and maintenance of the bleeder system. MSHA MOUNT HOPE, WV  
typical face sketches have also been included.

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Once the exhausting fan is placed in service in the mine, the ventilation of the Lower Big Branch Portion of the Mine (LBB2 #1, LBB2 #2, LBB2 #3, LBB2 #4) will change from intake to return. The area will be ventilated using a split of intake entering from Parallel North Mains and by air entering at EP-8.

When the exhausting fan is placed in service it will cause air to switch direction and begin entering at the Birchton Portals. The return entry from the active section along the Parallel Old North Panel will become an additional intake from the Birchton Portals once the fan is placed in service. This entry will be made common with the other intakes in the Parallel Old North Panel before it splits off to sweep around the glory hole and enter the return air split. The air in the neutral entries along the #4 North and #5 North belts will also change direction and begin to flow inby rather than outby.

All air changes will be made on an idle shift after the exhausting fan has been put in service.

Once the changes have been made, a thorough examination of the mine and ventilation system will be completed.

*AND RECORDED*  
*The District Manager will be notified when the exhausting fan is placed in service and the results of the ventilation change.*  
This mine currently has no miner's representative. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at (304) 854-3516.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Performance Coal Company, Inc.



Eric Lilly  
Mine Engineer

MSHA  
MOUNT HOPE, WV

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## Northern District Longwall Bleeder System

The overall bleeder system for the Northern District will consist of a total of five longwall panels. The panel lengths vary due to the lay of the coal reserves.

The bleeder design and panel development layout typically utilizes three or four entry gateroads. Bleeder entries are developed across the back-end of each longwall panel, separate from the longwall set-up entries. This design allows for proper evaluation of individual panels.

The ventilation of the initial longwall panel and the subsequent panels in this district will direct air through the headgate entries, across the longwall face, into the tailgate entries, and then into the bleeder entries. The air will exit out of the bleeder entries at the bleeder return airshaft.

### **Water Control:**

The water in the Northern District will be controlled by natural drainage and dewatering systems currently in place in the mine. Water in the bleeder entries and gateroads will be pumped to a central location within the district and removed from the mine via deep-well turbine pumps.

### **Roof Control:**

The immediate and main mine roof will be supported in accordance with the approved roof control plan. Additional supplementary roof support, which may consist of cribs, jacks, post, propsetters or other approved roof support material, will be installed in the bleeder entries as necessary to maintain these airways throughout the life of the bleeder system.

### **Bleeder System Evaluation:**

The bleeder system is designed to maintain positive ventilating pressure against the gob while providing an adequate quantity and quality of air to the longwall face. This system will allow for effective ventilation of the gob area as each panel is mined and to prevent and minimize methane accumulation within the bleeder system. As the air exits the longwall face and enters the tailgate it will split and the air will travel inby into the gob and outby for at least one crosscut before entering the bleeder system.

Bleeder evaluation checkpoints, Evaluation Points (EP's), and Monitoring Points (MP's), will be established and maintained within the bleeder system district as each longwall panel is completed. EP's and MP's will be established in the headgate and tailgate entries of the retreating longwall face, to assure proper air flow quality and quantity. These checkpoints will be located inby on the headgate side and outby on the tailgate. During mining the EP's LW - 1 and LW - 2 and MP's A and B will move outby as the longwall face advances (See Typical Longwall Face Sketch).

MP's will also be established along the headgate entries, starting at the set-up face and at intervals of approximately 2,000 feet. These MP's will become active once the longwall face passes by the pre-established points (See Longwall Bleeder Map). These MP's will assure proper airflow inby the longwall face headgate entries. These points

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## Northern District Longwall Bleeder System

will be established on each consecutive longwall panel and will remain part of the bleeder system evaluation and will be examined on a weekly basis, until the active panel is completed.

As each longwall panel is completed, bleeder evaluation check points will be established in the existing gateroads just outby the longwall recovery face. Stoppings and regulators will be installed in the entries and adjusted for proper airflow direction and quantity. EP's will also be established at the back end of each active and mined out longwall panel as the district is developed. These EP's will be examined weekly for proper airflow direction, air quality, air quantity, and methane and oxygen content. The information obtained during the weekly exam shall determine the effectiveness of the bleeder system. EP's are located at strategic locations to allow a thorough review and evaluation of the bleeder system. The locations of these points are shown on the Line Diagram Map.

Additional intake air to assist in the dilution of methane gas being liberated along the longwall face during mining will be supplied from the belt entry. This additional air quantity will also help remove respirable rock and coal dust away from the longwall face. The belt air will be monitored and comply with 30 CFR 75-350. Pyatt Boone (Model 980A and 1703 or equivalent) CO monitors will be installed to comply with 30 CFR 75-351.

Proposed and estimated air quantities are shown on the accompanying maps. Once the bleeder fan is activated, and proposed ventilation controls are installed and/or removed an evaluation of the bleeder system's Northern District will be conducted to assure intended airflow direction and air quantities.

*Add additional safety precaution required for all Longwall Mining: If methane levels increase 1% or more at an EP between weekly examinations, the mine management shall immediately evaluate the entire bleeder system, addressing stoppings to be left intact or reconstructed to maintain safe methane levels and to separate active returns from gob areas.*

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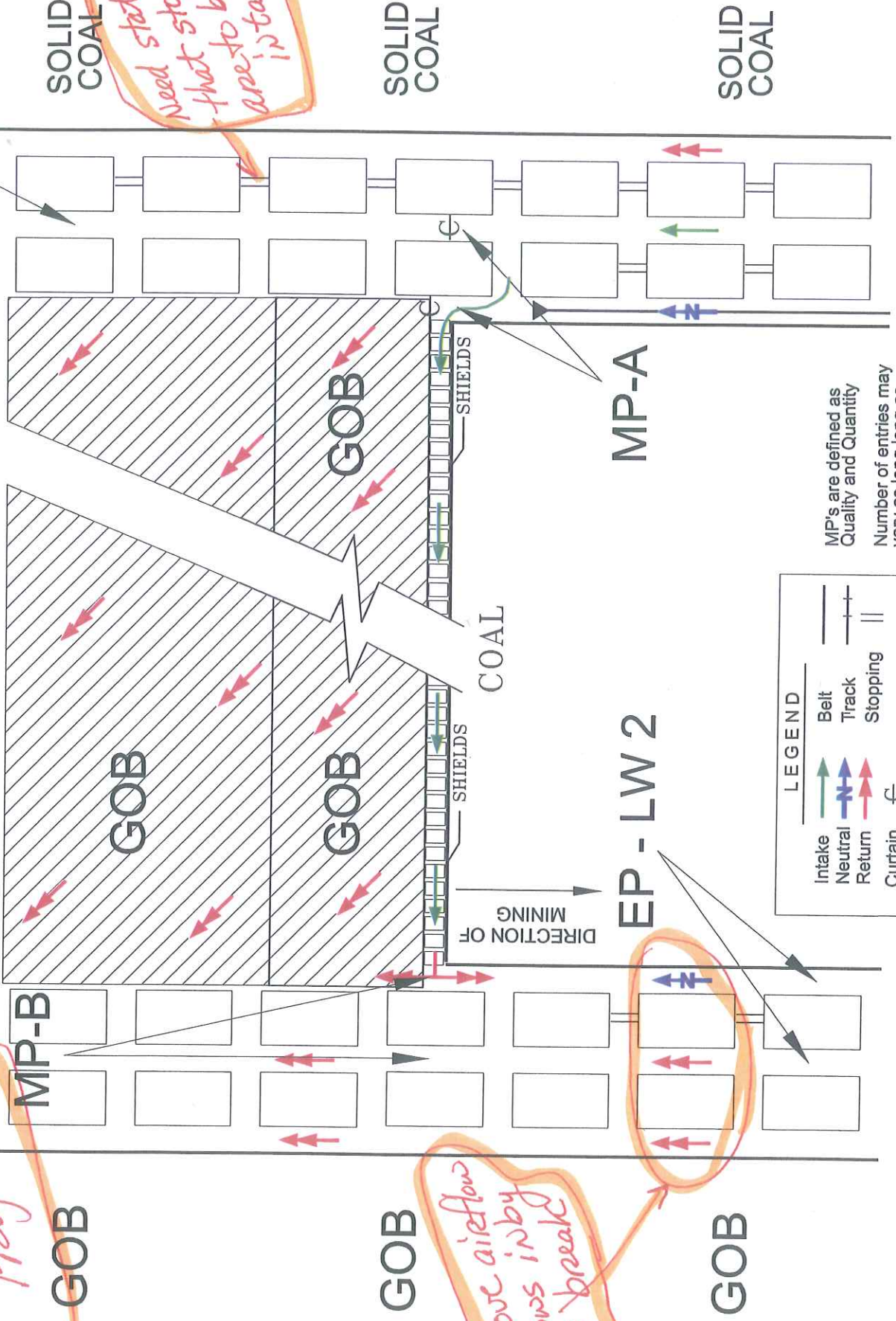
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# TYPICAL LONGWALL FACE VENTILATION

Performance Coal Company

Upper Big Branch Mine 46-08436 (U-3042-92)

EP - LW1



SOLID COAL

SOLID COAL

SOLID COAL

*Need statements that stopping is not to be intact*

*Is Not as Showed Projected*

*move airflow arrows in by one break*

MP's are defined as Quality and Quantity  
Number of entries may vary as long as ventilation scheme stays the same.

**LEGEND**

- Intake (blue arrow)
- Neutral (green arrow)
- Return (red arrow)
- Belt (double line)
- Track (single line)
- Stopping (vertical line)
- Curtain (circle with cross)

Not to Scale



# TYPICAL LONGWALL FACE VENTILATION

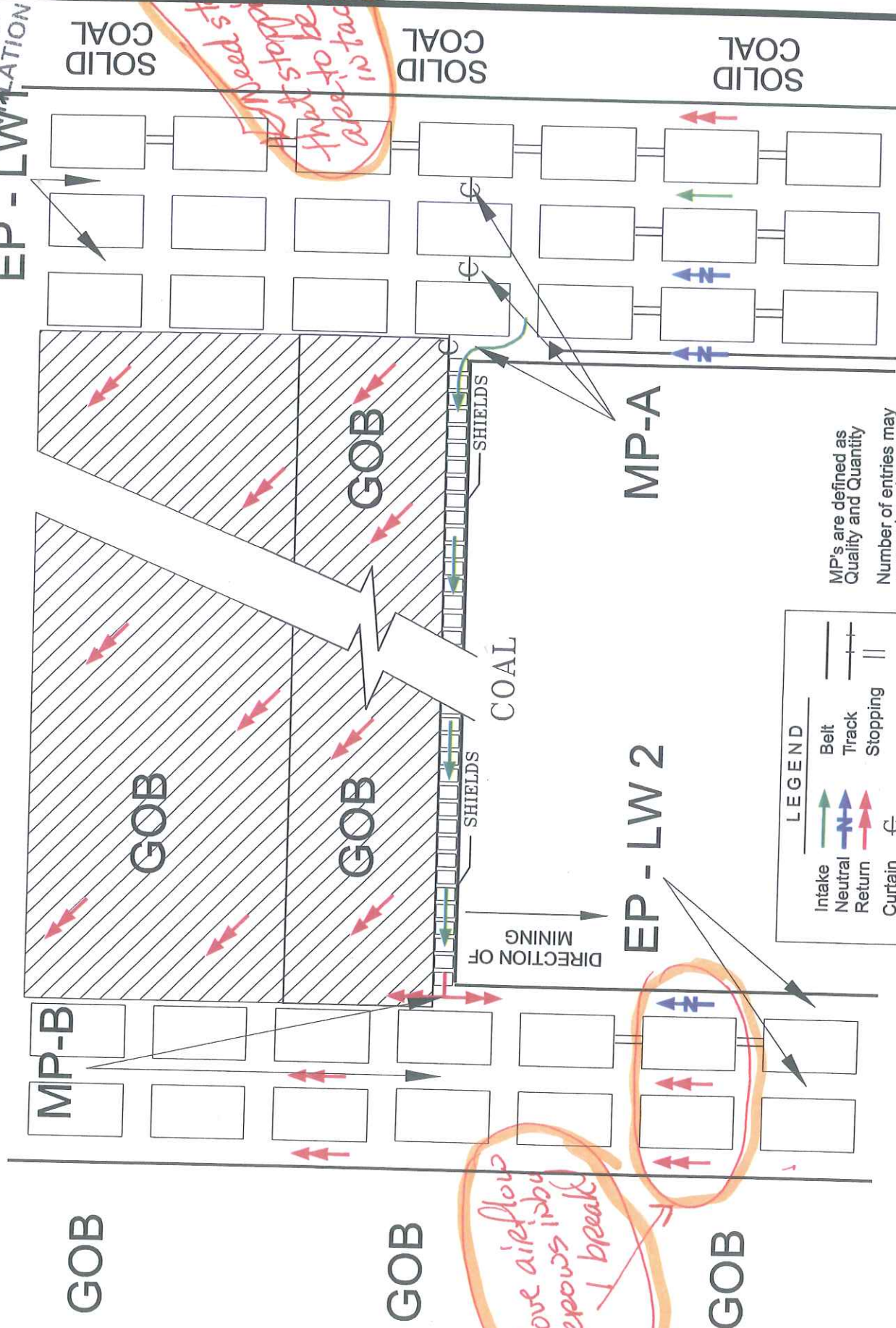
Performance Coal Company

Upper Big Branch Mine 46-08436 (U-3042-92)

MONT HOPE WV

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RECEIVED VENTILATION



MP's are defined as Quality and Quantity

Number of entries may vary as long as ventilation scheme stays the same.

**LEGEND**

- Intake (Green arrow)
- Neutral (Blue arrow)
- Return (Red arrow)
- Curtain (Circle with cross)
- Belt (Line with cross)
- Track (Line with cross)
- Stopping (Line with cross)

Not to Scale



# TYPICAL LONGWALL FACE VENTILATION

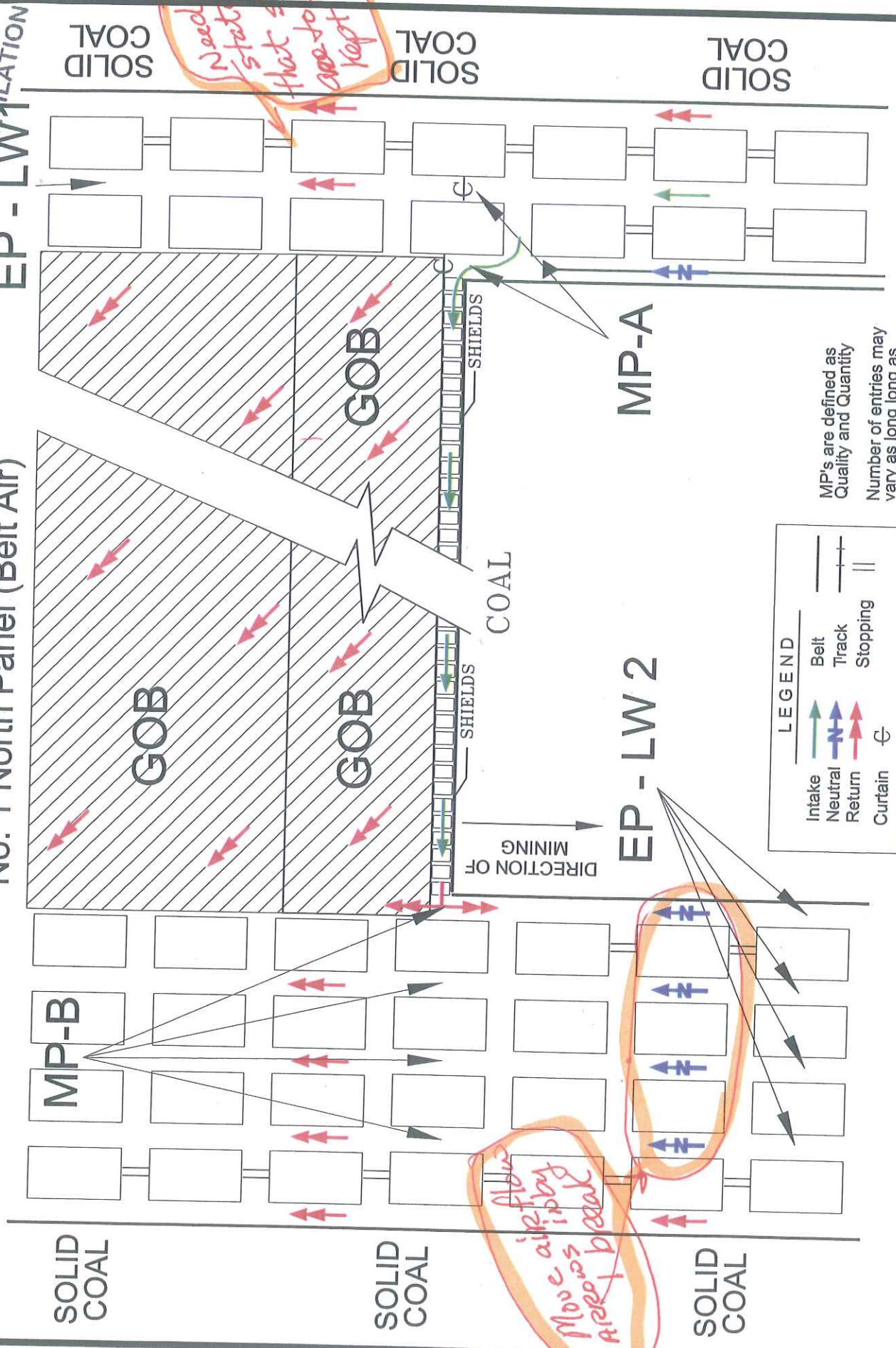
Performance Coal Company

Upper Big Branch Mine 46-08436 (U-3042-92)

No. 1 North Panel (Belt Air)

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RECEIVED VENTILATION EP - LW



**LEGEND**

- Intake (Green arrow)
- Neutral (Blue arrow)
- Return (Red arrow)
- Curtain (C symbol)
- Belt (Line with cross-ticks)
- Track (Line with vertical ticks)
- Stopping (Line with horizontal ticks)

MP's are defined as Quality and Quantity  
 Number of entries may vary as long as ventilation scheme stays the same.

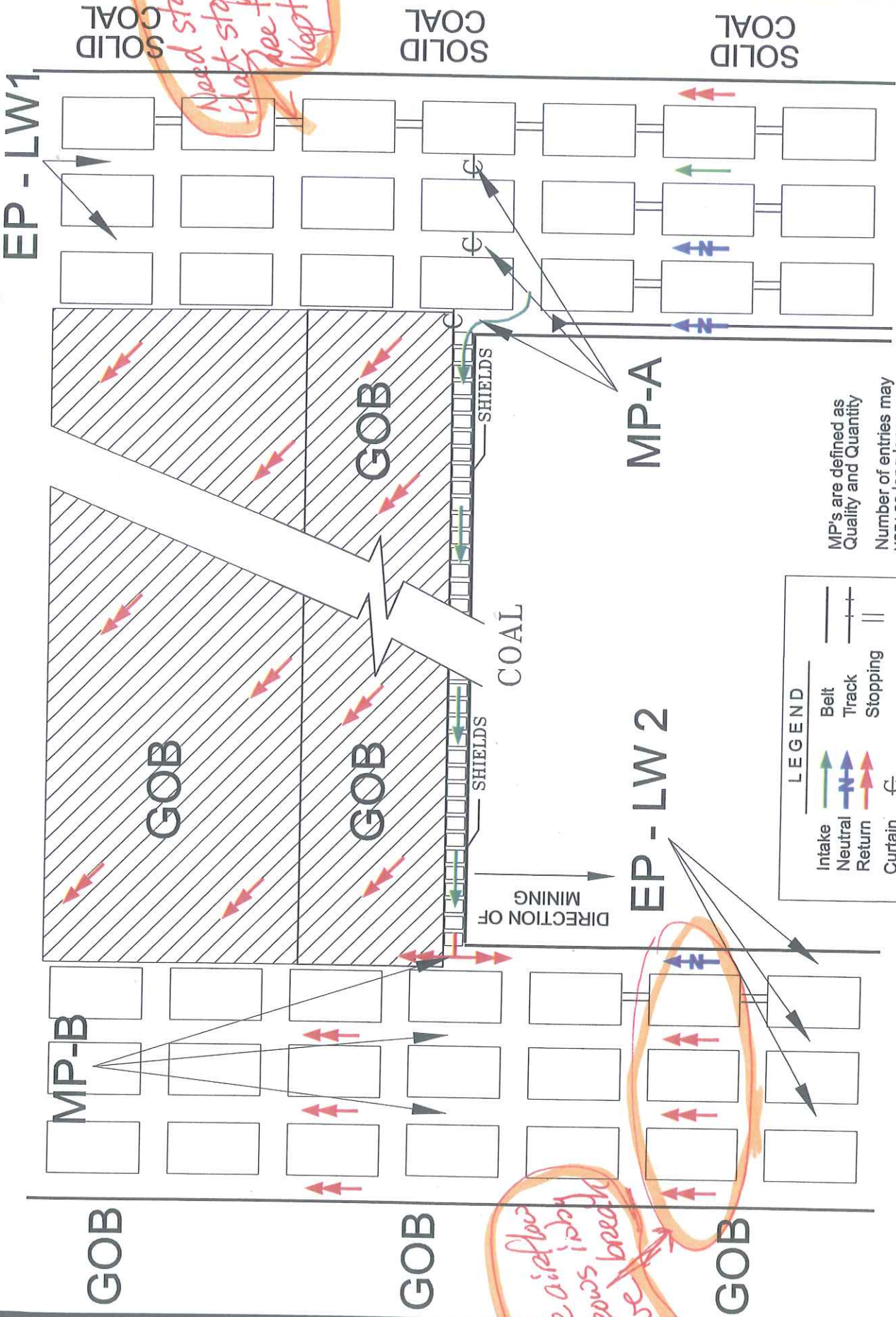
Not to Scale

*Need menst start stopping that to be kept instead*

*Allow air to by Move air by Area's break*



**TYPICAL LONGWALL FACE VENTILATION**  
 Performance Coal Company  
 Upper Big Branch Mine 46-08436 (U-3042-92)



MP's are defined as Quality and Quantity  
 Number of entries may vary as long long as ventilation scheme stays the same.

**LEGEND**

- Intake
- Neutral
- Return
- Curtain
- Belt
- Track
- Stopping

Not to Scale