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Sent: Friday, March 10, 2006 2:26 AM
To: zzMSHA-Standards - Comments to Fed Reg Group
Subject: Public Submission

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Public Comments on Underground Mine Rescue Equipment and Technology:=====

Title: Underground Mine Rescue Equipment and Technology
FR Document Number: 06-00722
Legacy Document ID:
RIN: 1219-AB44
Publish Date: 01/25/2006 00:00:00
Submitter Info:

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Comment Info: =====

General Comment: This is in answer to Question #8 under Section E, Communications.

The question concerned PEDs. I am guessing that you are referring to Personal Emergency Devices, but that's only because nowhere in the Request for Information is a definition of the acronym PED. Also, judging by the loaded tone of the question, I surmise that the intent is to discourage any positive responses to these devices. I say this from my own experience a few years ago during an MSHA hearing on the Emergency Evacuations Emergency Temporary Standard, at which several people attempted to present testimony on the benefits of PEDs. The person who was running the hearing (Mr. Sexhauer) managed to cut off one speaker in favor of these life-saving devices. At the break, when I tried to talk to him, I only got a warning not to make this complicated.

MSHA needs to lose its unhealthy opposition to PEDs. These things have a track record for saving lives. Just look at your own web-site. If PEDs had been in the rules all along who knows how many miners would still be alive today?

PED technology: Saying that the technology isn't there is like rewriting history. If MSHA claims the technology isn't there, then the pages on msha.gov concerning Willow Creek ought to be removed, because the the statements are contradictory.

Cost: The coal companies can afford the money. It would probably cost more to recruit and train replacement miners.

It is crucial to safety that you procede objectively.

Sincerely,

C.R. Martinez

AB44-COMM-39