

**U.S. Department of Labor**

Mine Safety and Health Administration  
1301 Airport Road  
Room D-200  
Beaver, West Virginia 25813-9426

May 24, 2010

HAND DELIVERED

Virgil Brown  
Mine Safety and Health Administration  
1301 Airport Road  
Beaver, West Virginia 25813-9426

Re: Investigation of explosion that occurred on April 5, 2010 at  
Performance Coal Company's Upper Big Branch Mine-South

Dear Mr. Brown:

As part of our investigation into the above matter, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) will be interviewing certain persons with knowledge of the events and circumstances relating to the incident. This investigation seeks to determine the cause or causes of the disaster at the Upper Big Branch Mine-South on April 5, 2010. It is consistent with MSHA's statutory authority to investigate mine accidents and take appropriate enforcement action.

In order to facilitate this investigation, we are asking that you be present to provide an interview statement at the MSHA Mine Academy at 1301 Airport Road, Beaver, West Virginia on May 24, 2010 at 1:00 PM. The Mine Academy is located on Airport Road, a quarter mile north of I-64, exit 125. Your statement is completely voluntary, and if you request us to keep your identity confidential, we will do so to the extent permitted by law.

The voluntary statements will be taken under oath by a court reporter. Questioning will be conducted by representatives of MSHA and the West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training. The interview will not be open to the general public.

You will have the right to have a personal representative of your choice present during the interview. Your representative, should you choose to have one, will be allowed to ask questions under appropriate circumstances for purposes of clarification only. This is not an adversarial proceeding; therefore, cross-examination will not be permitted. In addition, you will be given an opportunity at the conclusion of his questioning to clarify any answers you have given and to make any statement you wish to make.

We require that you refrain from discussing their statements with any other persons who have been or may be asked to give a statement in conjunction with this accident investigation since we would like to obtain the independent recollections of all persons concerned.

The giving of a statement is completely voluntary. Should you wish to give any additional information to MSHA, you may do so by contacting me at the address below. A copy of your

statement may be requested in writing and will be provided at a time in which provision of the statement would not prejudice ongoing enforcement activities. If you anticipate any difficulty in attending, or if you have any questions relating to this matter, please contact me at the Mine Academy or by telephone at (304) 256-3522.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

(b) (7)(C)  
(b) (7)(C)

Norman Page  
Chief Investigator

(b) (7)(C)