

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

As of: 9/11/23, 4:48 PM
Received: September 10, 2023
Status: Posted
Posted: September 11, 2023
Tracking No. lmd-lx1r-wjtd
Comments Due: September 11, 2023
Submission Type: Web

Docket: MSHA-2023-0001

Lowering Miners' Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica and Improving Respiratory Protection

Comment On: MSHA-2023-0001-0002

Lowering Miners' Exposure: Respirable Crystalline Silica and Improving Respiratory Protection

Document: MSHA-2023-0001-1397

Comment from Dodson, Willie

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General Comment

This is the personal comment of Willie Dodson of Appalachian Voices. App Voices will be submitting a more extensive comment on behalf of the organization.

In order to be concise, I will just say that I echo my organization's comments, as well as those of the National Black Lung Association and local BLA chapters, Appalachian Citizens Law Center, Sam Petsonk, Bob Cohen, Drew Harris and the UMWA.

In particular, I want to emphasize that I personally, and the advocacy community more generally, are well aware that MSHA is under-funded, and that it would be difficult for the agency to conduct all the inspections, sampling, enforcement and related administrative functions that we are asking for. However, as numerous comments have made clear, many aspects of the current proposal will give the industry loopholes they can exploit to totally undermine the purpose of this rule. So MSHA needs to do the right thing and finalize a strong rule, even though this will be a tall order given the agency's budget constraints. Please know that the advocacy community will continue to exert pressure on Congress to address the black lung crises, and that a major part of this moving forward will be a push for Congress to increase funding for MSHA.