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Jobs, Local Economies and Livelihoods Threatened by Obama Administration's Onerous Coal Mining Regulations

Charleston, WV – The Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources today held a [field hearing](#) in Charleston, West Virginia on the Obama Administration's Office of Surface Mining, Enforcement and Regulation's (OSM) onerous and job threatening rewrite of the Stream Buffer Zone Rule. Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn (CO-05) was joined by Rep. Bill Johnson (OH-06) and Rep. Shelly Moore Capito (WV-02) at the hearing to discuss how the Administration's sweeping new rewrites to coal mining regulations will cost jobs and decrease American energy production. By the Obama Administration's own estimates, the rewritten rule could cost up to 7,000 coal-mining jobs, or 10% of the jobs in the industry.

"Continuing to work on a rule that will knowingly eliminate thousands of jobs and will result in 29,000 people living below the poverty level is inexcusable policy," [said Chairman Lamborn](#). "It is our job as lawmakers to institute policies that will create jobs and make lives better for Americans--instead, this Administration is pursuing a rule that will do exactly the opposite."

"The President has been touring the Midwest trying to promote what he calls a jobs bill. I find it ironic that his Administration has admitted that the rewrite of the Stream Buffer zone rule will cost thousands of direct and indirect jobs. If the President was serious about job creation, he would direct OSM to stop going forward with a regulation that will result in thousands of hard-working Americans losing their jobs," [said Rep. Johnson](#).

"West Virginians are ready to lead this nation out of recession while making us more energy independent. Unfortunately, this cannot happen in the current regulatory environment. Folks I talk to back here keep telling me that they are ready and willing to create jobs if only the federal government would get off their backs," [said Rep. Capito](#).

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member, and former Natural Resources Committee Chairman, Nick Rahall (D-WV) welcomed the Subcommittee's hearing in his home state, *"I am glad that the Subcommittee has chosen to get to the heart of the matter and conduct a hearing in West Virginia, where Members can hear first-hand about the negative effects a revised stream buffer zone rule would have on our coal miners."*

Bipartisan witnesses at the hearing gave compelling testimony towards the devastating impacts of the proposed Stream Buffer Zone Rule on jobs and the local economies. **West**

Virginia Governor [Earl Ray Tomblin \(D\)](#) shared his concern with Obama Administration's regulations that are putting hardworking West Virginians out of work, *"EPA's obstruction of mining permits and this rule from OSM threatens the very existence of the coal industry, in West Virginia and across the nation. Not only are they destroying coal mining and other good paying jobs, but they are also increasing the cost of electricity and every product made using electricity."*

[Bradley C. Lambert](#), Deputy Director of Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy said that the *"effects of this rulemaking would eliminate many jobs and millions of dollars of revenue in Virginia."* Lambert also noted that, *"employment opportunities in the Appalachian Basin are very limited and the loss of over seven thousands jobs...would only increase the poverty level in the area."*

[Roger D. Horton](#), a thirty year veteran of West Virginia's coal-mining industry and member of Local 5958 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) worried that, *"this proposal from OSM is but one part of an 'open war' on American coal being waged by bureaucrats in Washington...to cripple the viability of West Virginia and other coal producing states as sources of domestic energy."* Horton also recognized a side-effect of the proposed rule for surface mining, *"Amazingly, the rule changes appear poised to dramatically impact underground mining perhaps more than surface mining,"* and that if implemented, *"the rule will throw the nation into an energy crisis the likes of which it has never seen."* Horton summarized the drastic impacts on American families saying, *"OSM's proposed rule casts a long shadow of uncertainty over our coal miners and communities by placing our entire economic livelihood in jeopardy."*

[Mike Carey](#), President of Ohio Coal Association, testified that the Obama Administration is waging a *"de facto war on coal"* and that the *"regulations, coupled with the permit delays across the entire Obama Administration, will be economically devastating and will have an inevitable adverse effect on our nation."* Carey described the effect of OSM's new rule on jobs, Appalachia will lose more than 20,000 jobs and nearly 70,000 coal related jobs would also be lost nationwide. Carey concluded that, *"Americans have lost enough jobs; don't allow tens of thousands of additional families to suffer from OSM's misguided and unjustified rule."*

[Jason Bostic](#), Vice-President of West Virginia Coal Association, whose membership accounts for 98 percent of West Virginia's coal production, commented on the *"politically-motivated actions of OSM and EPA"* that have *"cast a long shadow of uncertainty over the coal industry,"* and threaten *"mining families and their communities"* that *"worry about their jobs their children, paying their bills and the fabric of their communities."* Speaking on the importance of coal mining to job creation, Bostic noted, *"Coal cannot openly sustain current jobs but could add even more if these arbitrary actions from Washington are contained."*

[Katharine Fredriksen](#), Senior Vice-President at CONSOL Energy, whose one coal complex in Southwestern Pennsylvania provides a total economic impact of local communities of almost \$2.6 billion and 6,740 direct and indirect jobs, noted that the implementation of the OSM rule would *"mean the loss of billions of dollars to the economy and literally thousands of jobs."*

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