

June 5, 2012

**STATEMENT – CONGRESSMAN HAL ROGERS (KY-05)**

**FOR THE RECORD OF EPA HEARING ON JUNE 5, 2012 IN FRANKFORT, KY**

While I regret that business in Washington keeps me from today's hearing, I wish to add my voice to the hundreds in attendance and the thousands I represent who have grave concern about the contemptible behavior by the Environmental Protection Agency. Time and again, EPA has pursued policies and procedures that undermine due process, circumvent the Congress, weaken local and state authority, and override longstanding practices - all the while going to great lengths to hide the poorly veiled intentions of this Administration – the demise of Kentucky's coal industry and coal miners.

Through constantly shifting standards, a maze of regulatory hoops, and unevenly applied rules, this process has brought only confusion to an already complex permit process. It's so distorted, even assessing where a permit resides in the process is impossible. What we do know is that only one 404 Individual Permit has been approved for a new surface mining operation in Kentucky. Only one new IP in three and a half years. That is downright shameful.

Whether you've taken note or not, coal operators have made great strides in reducing their environmental footprint, restoring mined areas, and being stewards of their communities - with or without governmental goading. In fact, many of the proud sponsors of the Eastern Kentucky PRIDE Program are coal operators and many of the mining families are the first to sign up for trash pick-ups, red bud tree plantings, and trail restoration efforts. These men and women, who call places like Pike, Martin, Floyd, Letcher and Harlan Counties home, are not seeking the complete elimination of current environmental laws, but instead ask only that they be applied in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner so they can build a business, start a family,

or purchase a home. Under this current permit embargo, all of this is growth is stifled; all of these dreams diminished. These are the men and women who are coaching little league, singing in the church choirs, and waking up at 5AM to mine coal, so you can wake up at 8AM to hot coffee. That is who this regulatory nightmare is hurting. And the best you can do is one individual permit!

We get that the EPA has a duty to protect the environment. But this duty must be fairly applied under the law and executed absent of political agendas; particularly an agenda that puts our energy security further in jeopardy and likely means the difference between working and welfare for a family. On behalf of the mining men and women of southern and eastern Kentucky, I ask that the EPA overturn its objections to these permits, set aside this political agenda, and allow coal miners in Kentucky to provide for their families, create jobs, and generate the affordable, American energy that our economic and national security so desperately need.