



May 2006

ALERT

SENATE PASSES MINE SAFETY BILL

The Senate approved by voice vote mine safety legislation (S 2803) that would require new emergency response measures for coal mines, enhance wireless communications and emergency breathing equipment in coal mines, and strengthen certain coal mine regulations. For all mines, the bill would impose a 15-minute reporting mandate for fatal and serious accidents, raise maximum fines to \$220,000 for flagrant violations, impose minimum fines of \$2,000 for unwarrantable failure violations and \$4,000 for unwarrantable orders. The bill also seeks to create a mine safety research division inside NIOSH to improve technology and provide for scholarships and grants for training miners and inspectors. The House of Representatives is expected to pass the same bill, based on a bipartisan agreement to address mine safety issues on a fast track, due to yet another coal industry tragedy this week.

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