

Statement on Mine Safety in the Wake of Tragedy in Upshur County, WV

Congressman

STATEMENT

Steve Rothman

New Jersey, District 9

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STATEMENT ON MINE SAFETY IN THE WAKE OF TRAGEDY IN UPSHUR COUNTY, WV

(Washington, DC)— Early Wednesday, twelve families in West Virginia received the terrible news that their loved ones had been killed in a mining accident. Congressman Steve Rothman's statement follows:

"On behalf of the 650,000 people of the 9th Congressional District of New Jersey, I extend our deepest sympathies to the 12 families who lost their loved ones in the tragic mine explosion in Upshur County, WV. We pray for them, for the miners whose lives were stolen from them, and for the full recovery of survivor Randal McCloy.

"After this tragedy at the Sago Mine, miners and their families in New Jersey and across the country are asking: what caused this devastating accident? Could more miners' lives have been saved? And how did such a horrific miscommunication occur, which offered false hope to far too many people.

"I expect the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to answer these questions and more in the course of their investigation. Further, to learn all that we possibly can from the mistakes at Sago Mine, I urge the MSHA to make their investigation public so that family members of miners will have complete access to the hearings and that the government can subpoena any and all necessary information.

"Although work in the nation's coal and metal/non-metal mines can be dangerous, it is not acceptable for those conditions to be unnecessarily life-threatening. Evidence has come to light that the Sago Mine had a history of safety violations. In 2005 alone, there were 181 citations against Sago and 15 orders to withdraw everyone from the mine area because of an imminent danger. With the advanced technologies available today, we must do more to ensure mines are properly ventilated and safely secured. After the MSHA investigation, the government should act quickly to beef up our federal safety standards to better protect miners and aid their families."

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