

**U.S. Department of Labor**

**SEP 13 2016**

Mine Safety and Health Administration  
201 12th Street South  
Arlington, Virginia 22202-5452



Mr. Mark G. Ellis  
President  
Industrial Minerals Association – North America  
1200 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 1150  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Ellis:

Thank you for your letter of July 25, 2016, requesting that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) form a Diesel Exhaust Health Effects Partnership with the mining industry, including both coal and metal and nonmetal mines, diesel engine manufacturers, and representatives of organized labor. Relatedly, you also requested that MSHA extend the comment period for the Request for Information (RFI) on Exposure of Underground Miners to Diesel Exhaust (81 FR 36826) by at least 90 additional days to allow time for the Partnership to begin work.

MSHA will work with NIOSH to form a Partnership that includes all relevant stakeholders from the mining community. Consistent with your request, the Partnership will provide all affected parties an opportunity to come together to understand the health effects from underground miners' exposure to diesel exhaust. The Partnership will also provide stakeholders an opportunity to identify best practices and new technologies including engineering controls that enhance control of diesel particulate matter and diesel exhaust exposures to improve protections for miners.

In response to your request, as well as requests from other stakeholders, MSHA published a notice in the *Federal Register* on August 25, 2016 announcing the extension of the comment period on the RFI from September 6, 2016 to November 30, 2016. This extension gives stakeholders additional time to evaluate the comments and testimonies received thus far and submit information to MSHA. This extension also provides sufficient time for the Partnership to begin its work.

Thank you for your continued interest in improving the health and safety of our nation's miners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph A. Main", is written over a horizontal line.

Joseph A. Main  
Assistant Secretary of Labor for  
Mine Safety and Health

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