

MINUTES
BOARD OF COAL MINE SAFETY
DEP New Stanton Office
June 11, 2026 – 10 AM – New Stanton, PA

VOTING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Nathan Houtz, DEP, Deputy Secretary for Active and Abandoned Mining Operations
Roger Berringer, United Mine Workers of America
Robert Bodenschatz, Pennsylvania Coal Alliance
Ronald Bowersox, United Mine Workers of America
Ronald Kingan, Jr., United Mine Workers of America
Todd Moore, Pennsylvania Coal Alliance
Joseph Zelanko, Pennsylvania Coal Alliance

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STAFF PRESENT

Laura Campbell, DEP, Policy Office
Heather Cordial, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Richard Marcil, DEP, Bureau of Regulatory Counsel
Dustin Mowery, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Jack Palumbo, DEP, Policy Office
Sean Ramey, DEP, Bureau of Regulatory Counsel
Brad Russian, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Peggy Scheloske, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Richard Wagner, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Chas Washlack, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STAFF PRESENT VIA TEAMS

Jeff Hamilton, DEP, Bureau of Mine Safety
Matthew Kessler, DEP, Bureau of Regulatory Counsel

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Nathan Houtz, DEP Deputy Secretary for Active and Abandoned Mining Operations and Acting Chairperson of the Board of Coal Mine Safety (Board), called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. in the DEP New Stanton Office, Washington and Green Conference Rooms. Acting Chairperson Houtz asked the members present to state their names and indicate who they were representing on the Board. He then asked all others present in person and via Microsoft Teams to introduce themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the draft March 4, 2026, meeting minutes and requested correction of a Board member's name and the addition of a statement from a public participant during discussion of expedited experience miner status for new miners. The Board also requested identifying meeting minutes posted to the website as draft until approved. Acting Chairperson Houtz stated that these items will be addressed.

Joseph Zelanko asked for his entire statement regarding underground mining automation to be added to the minutes. Acting Chairperson Houtz explained that meeting minutes reflect summaries of discussions.

The Board deferred voting on the March 4, 2026, meeting minutes until the next meeting.

DRUG TESTING RECIPROCITY

Richard Wagner, Director, Bureau of Mine Safety, reported on the Department's legal review of reciprocity involving decertification actions taken in other states. Wagner stated that Section 510(b) of the Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act (Act), regarding sanctions, provides the Department with specific options for decertification. It does not allow certification to be suspended or revoked based on an action taken by another state.

Todd Moore asked about initial certification and whether out-of-state certification status is considered. Wagner replied that full reciprocity is not needed to do so and certification applications include a question asking whether sanctions have been taken against certifications in another state even though, under the Act, this may not be considered. The Department will ask the applicant for an explanation of sanctions and make a determination regarding further action.

EQUIPMENT TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

Chas Washlack, Mine Safety Electrical Program Manager, Bureau of Mine Safety, reported that there was not an update on the Equipment Task Force.

Ronald Bowersox expressed concern that miners are not represented on the Task Force. Wagner explained the Act establishes that the Department and coal operators are members of the Task Force. The Department will continue to keep miners informed on topics discussed at Task Force meetings.

EXPEDITED PROMOTION OF NEW MINERS

Brad Russian, Bituminous Mine Safety Division, Bureau of Mine Safety, provided an update regarding a proposal to allow an apprentice miner to become a certified miner after six months of experience along with additional training, a reduction from the statutorily-required one year of mining experience. Russian stated that the Department does not believe this proposal adequately protects the health and safety of miners. The Department supports a comprehensive training program.

BYLAWS

Acting Chairperson Houtz explained that this is a regulatory board that votes to adopt regulations developed by the Department as authorized by the Act. The Board is equivalent to the Environmental Quality Board, the regulatory board with the authority to adopt regulations developed by the Department's other programs. Richard Marcil stated that the two regulatory boards do not have bylaws and the Department would like to maintain this consistency. Further, the Act does not provide the authority for bylaws.

Joseph Zelanko provided that this issue arose at the last meeting when a subcommittee was proposed and not established because the Board does not have bylaws. Zelanko explained that subcommittees would provide flexibility to convene between Board meetings with a wider group of stakeholders. The draft bylaws Zelanko submitted prior to the meeting provide for work groups within the parameters of the Sunshine Act. Marcil responded that additional Board meetings can be scheduled as needed, and subcommittees can be created under Robert's Rules of Order. Marcil went on to explain that the discussion of technical issues leading to the development of a regulation is classified as agency business under the Sunshine Act. As such, these discussions shall occur during public meetings noticed two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Following further Board discussion, Acting Chairperson Houtz summarized that the Board may either schedule more regular meetings or vote under Robert's Rules of Order to form subcommittees. Acting Chairperson Houtz went on to outline that subcommittee members would be determined, a meeting date set and noticed, and a report given at the next Board meeting.

SAFETY INCIDENTS

Brad Russian, Bituminous Mine Safety Division, Bureau of Mine Safety, reported on two safety incidents. There was a near miss at a Rosebud Mining Company mine in which a miner was struck by a two-person personnel carrier. The incident remains under investigation, and only preliminary information is available. Following the incident, a backup-alarm was installed and inspected by the Bureau of Mine Safety.

Russian reported on a fatal incident at a Core Natural Resources mine in which a miner was fatally injured while rib-support work was being performed. The investigation remains ongoing. The Department will provide additional information to the Board when the investigation is complete.

Ronald Kingan, Jr. asked if the Bureau of Mine Safety could provide any updates on a mine fire that occurred last year. Russian responded that the Bureau was still actively working through the investigation and that an update could be provided upon completion of the investigation.

OTHER BUSINESS

Joseph Zelanko announced this was his final meeting as a member of the Board and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. He reflected on his family's history and

his career in Pennsylvania's coal industry and emphasized the importance of continuing efforts to prevent recurring mining accidents. Board members and Department representatives thanked Joseph Zelanko for his service and contributions to the Board and Pennsylvania's coal industry.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Acting Chairperson Houtz asked the members of the public in attendance if they would like to provide any other comments. There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The next Board meeting is scheduled to be held on September 15, 2026, at the DEP New Stanton District Office. With no further business to discuss, Acting Chairperson Houtz asked for a motion to adjourn.

Roger Berringer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Todd Moore seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.