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Letter: Don't pile more safety rules on coal mines

The men and women of the mining industry take safety very seriously. Maybe that's why well over 60 percent of U.S. coal mines operate without a single lost work time injury every year and mine safety continues to improve.

Last year, with the full support of the mining industry and labor, Congress passed the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act (MINER Act). It contains new safety provisions aimed at making mining even safer and mandates ongoing studies to determine how effective mine safety measures are and what more might be done given the technology that is available today. Now, in response to the Utah Crandall Canyon disaster, some in Congress want to pass more legislation containing new, untested regulations and oversight at a time when the mining industry is working hard to implement the MINER Act.

Stated simply, we need time to fully implement the MINER Act and evaluate the results. Only then should we move toward developing new initiatives aimed at even better mine safety. Piling new, unproven and unnecessary regulations and oversight on the mining industry and the mine safety process will only hurt our communities and won't contribute to safer mines. Rather it will simply muddy the waters and make interpretation of the successes of the MINER Act difficult to see.

We should all contact our congressmen and tell them to let the MINER Act work - don't tamper with a good thing.

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