

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KENNEDY, HELP COMMITTEE LEADERS SCHEDULE VISIT TO WEST VIRGINIA; WILL MEET SAGO MINE FAMILIES, MINE WORKERS; CHECK PROGRESS OF INVESTIGATION

Washington, D.C. - Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Health Education Labor Pensions (HELP) Committee Ranking Member, Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the HELP Committee, Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) today announced that they will meet with the families of Sago Mine workers whose lives were lost early this year, as well as officials of ICG (International Coal Group) in West Virginia on Friday, January 20, 2006.

The bipartisan delegation of Senators will meet with Sago Mine families, employees, officials of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and ICG officials in Buckhannon, WV, and will be available to the media during a press conference from 1:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Senator Kennedy said: "The tragic loss of twelve men in West Virginia reminds us that America can do better to protect our miners. We owe it to them and their families to push for stronger regulations and vigorous enforcement of our safety laws. And we must insist on the best technology available to keep our nation's miners safe and alive."

"All of us are working to ensure that we are fully informed of the progress of the joint investigation underway by MSHA and the state of West Virginia and look forward to our visit with the families and company officials," Senator Enzi said. "This trip will help us better understand how we can help spare other mining families from similar losses of sons, fathers, and husbands in the future."

The delegation's schedule for the trip follows. Note that media access will be limited to the delegation's press conference scheduled for 1:30 p.m.

- **10:30 am — Senators arrive at Clarksburg Benedum Airport, Clarksburg, West Virginia.**
- **10:30 am - 11:30 — Senators drive by Sago Mine site by bus and receive briefing (note: access is restricted; Senators will not enter the mine). MSHA District Director Kevin Strickland will be on the bus to brief Senators about the accident and MSHA's ongoing investigation.**
- **11:30 am - 1:30 pm — Senators hold private meeting with families of deceased miners in Buckhannon at West Virginia Wesleyan University.**
- **1:30 pm — Press Conference by bipartisan Senate delegation. West Virginia Wesleyan University: Benedum Hall, Nellie Wilson Lounge.**
- **2 pm — Senators meet with workers from Sago Mine (press conference location).**
- **3 pm — Senators meet with executives from International Coal Group in Buckhannon.**
- **Senators depart for Washington, DC at the conclusion of ICG meeting.**

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