



December 8, 2010

**To: Members of the House of Representatives
House staff assigned to steel and/or workplace safety issues**

AISI URGES MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE TO OPPOSE H.R. 6495, the Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2010

Background: The American steel industry places a high priority on safety and health matters at both industrial and mining workplaces, as it is critical that our valuable workers remain safe and healthy. AISI members continue to work collaboratively with their employees to decrease the number and frequency of workplace incidents. Industry, labor and the federal government share a common goal of continuing to improve occupational safety and health at industrial workplaces. We therefore support policy measures appropriately designed to increase worker safety at industrial and mining workplaces. However, the Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2010, H.R. 6495, contains a number of provisions that are counterproductive to achieving this shared goal.

Situation: H.R. 6495 does not focus on cooperative efforts among company management, employees, and government that can help maximize mining and workplace safety and health. AISI members' experiences have demonstrated that such cooperative efforts are the best way in which to achieve shared goals of increased worker safety. Instead, this bill contains a number of provisions that wrongly focus on expanding MSHA's authority, imposing criminal penalties on employers, and exposing companies to more litigation. Inordinate emphasis on punishing employers and bureaucratic processes will serve to misdirect priorities of all stakeholders, create unnecessary hurdles for employers, and create an adversarial environment that will prevent optimum mine safety and health benefits from being realized. This legislation would also have a negative cost impact on domestic steel companies that use coal as both a raw material and an energy source.

Request: AISI urges a renewed focus on alternative cooperative government-industry approaches to promoting worker health and safety in mining workplaces. Unfortunately, the Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2010, H.R. 6495, concentrates on counterproductive and unnecessary penalties, litigation, and unfair abatement mandates rather than adopting a more balanced cooperative approach that has been shown to be more effective at protecting miners. Accordingly, AISI urges Members of the House to oppose H.R. 6495, when it is considered on the House floor today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Gibson".

Thomas J. Gibson
President and CEO