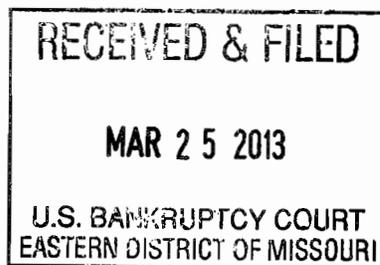


March 20, 2013

The Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States
Re: Case No. 123-51502
Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse
111 S.10th Street, 4th Floor
St. Louis, MO 63102



Dear Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States,

It has been brought to my attention through the local news media and several employees who are members of the Mannington Church of Christ, of which I am an Elder of said congregation, that through the use of bankruptcy proceedings within the court system by Patriot Coal, the employees pensions and health care benefits are in grave danger of being taken away from the employees, retirees and there spouses. These benefits were received by the coal minors, through the bargaining units of the union and company representatives contained in past contracts covering several years.

Therefore, I am writing to respectfully request that any rulings made by the courts would protect the benefits that have been contractually provided to the Patriot employees, who are my brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and neighbors.

The area we live, worship and work in, north central West Virginia, is rich in coal deposits. Therefore these family's for many years and generations have made there livelihood by bringing these coal deposits out of the ground and to market to provide the energy needed for all commerce. Many retired and currently working miners, there family's and in some cases, there widows, rely on these benefits for there very survival.

Coal country, really is, "coal country"! The financial loss to the communities in this area would be devastating, to say the least. I'm sure many businesses would be forced to close. The current economical climate will not stand the strain. This action would lead to an avalanche of layoffs and business closings.

The snowball effect would hit charitable organizations, churches and communities alike.

This is just not a workable outcome. Patriot coal needs to find other ways to help there bottom line other than the backs of the employees who actually get the coal out of the ground for Patriot. With all due respect, I request that the court rule in favor of the employees, so they can keep their hard earned benefits for themselves, families and communities.

Respectfully,
Merle R. Cole
6724 Husky Highway
Mannington, WV 26582

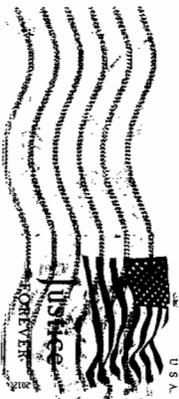
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Merle R. Cole".

Retired, 32 years as employee of Dominion Gas. Union employee for 16 yrs. Operations supervisor for 16yrs. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Manning Church of Christ
706 East Main Street
P.O. Box 107
Mannington WV 26582

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The Honorable Kathy A. Swartz - States
Re: Case No. 123-51502
Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse
111 S. 10th Street, 4th Floor
St. Louis, MO 63102

ESD 12-51502-13-005