

# Rockefeller: Congress Must Act on Mine Safety Bill

the Associated Press

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — Sen. Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia says it's time for Congress to stop delaying federal legislation that would help keep coal miners safe.

His comments come on the heels of an internal review criticizing the Mine Safety and Health Administration for its handling of West Virginia's Upper Big Branch mine before a 2010 explosion killed 29 men.

Rockefeller calls the depth of the agency's failures appalling and unacceptable. He says MSHA must address all of the report's issues and ensure the failures never happen again.

Fellow Democrat and U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall agrees, saying the report released Tuesday depicts a severely flawed agency.

Both want Congress to pass legislation that would give MSHA more enforcement authority and increase criminal penalties. The bill would also strengthen whistleblower protections and require independent accident investigations.

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