

REP. GEORGE COMMENTS

MINE RECLAMATION HEARING

GOOD MORNING. IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS AN ISSUE THAT HAS BEEN A CONCERN OF MINE SINCE I JOINED THE LEGISLATURE 24 YEARS AGO.

IT IS NO SECRET THAT PENNSYLVANIA LEADS THE NATION IN MILES OF POLLUTED STREAMS AND RIVERS. OVER 2400 MILES OF OUR WATERWAYS ARE NOT UP TO STANDARD, AND THE MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IS WITHOUT QUESTION **ACID MINE DRAINAGE**.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I MET WITH A REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR FROM THE EPA WHO EXPLAINED THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS INTERESTED IN MAKING THE CLEANUP OF ACID MINE WATER AND THE RECLAMATION OF ABANDONED MINES A TOP PRIORITY.

FROM THE LACK OF FUNDING WE CURRENTLY RECEIVE

FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THAT HAS NOT HAPPENED.

MR. SEIF'S DEPARTMENT ESTIMATES THAT WE ARE LOOKING AT A \$15 BILLION PROBLEM. THAT IS A TREMENDOUSLY COSTLY PROPOSITION, BUT THE SAD FACT IS, IF WE DO NOT ATTACK IT NOW, IT WILL ONLY GROW MORE COSTLY.

THAT COST WILL BE BORNE BY EVERY WATER COMPANY, MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY, AND RATEPAYER IN PENNSYLVANIA.

ON APRIL 30 I INTRODUCED HOUSE BILL 1427, WHICH IS CURRENTLY THE ONLY MAJOR PIECE OF LEGISLATION AIMED AT REMEDIATING THIS PROBLEM. IT IS MY HOPE THAT AFTER WE HEAR FROM OUR WITNESSES TODAY, THIS COMMITTEE CAN MOVE FORWARD AND WORK TOGETHER ON THIS ISSUE.