



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Bruce Rauner, Governor
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MINUTES OF MEETING
OF
ILLINOIS STATE MINING BOARD
BENTON, ILLINOIS
AUGUST 10, 2016

The following State Mining Board members were present:

John Duty
Larry Jones
Randy Lewis
Tom Smith
Jim Steiner
Steve Willis
Jim Hafliger, Executive Officer

The meeting was called to order by Executive Officer Jim Hafliger. A roll call of board members was made with all members present. Having a quorum, Mr. Hafliger proceeded with the meeting.

The minutes from the April 21, 2016 State Mining Board meeting were reviewed and accepted as presented.

Executive Officer Hafliger stated the only item on the agenda was a request by Hamilton County Coal, Hamilton #1 Mine to extend the crosscut centers from 200 to 250 feet. The company had previously obtained approval for 200 foot cross cut centers.

General Manager Ezra French made the opening comments for the company and indicated Larry Bennett would address the Board regarding the extension request. Mr. Bennett indicated the

company was looking at several factors relating to the increased distance. One being pillar stability, which goes up with the increased length. Second is horizontal stress which is an issue within the Illinois basin. The increased length would eliminate 20 cross cuts in a 20,000 foot panel and the company would stagger crosscuts at 125 feet, therefore minimizing the number of four way intersections. Nearly all of the roof fall issues have been in the north/south direction at the four way intersections. The cross cuts, also, would be angled off of a straight 90 degree to 70 degrees.

Board member Willis had a question on ventilation in the tailgate upon retreating and methane generation. The company said they have not had problems with caving tight but instead the top hanging up. Mr. Bennett explained how support is provided through pumpable cribs. Mr. Willis asked if this proposal has been submitted to MSHA and Mr. Bennet stated it has not been submitted.

Executive Officer Hafliger indicated it would be difficult for the board to address this issue as they had not received this information in advance even though the company had been asked to submit in advance. Therefore, the agency and board members have not had the ability to review this request with in-house staff. He then asked the board if they had any questions.

Board member Steiner asked if currently staggering with 200 foot centers and Mr. Bennett stated they were not but company has done some limited staggering in bleeder entries which helped with roof stability. Mr. Steiner asked if there were any roof issues with the 200 foot centers. Mr. Bennett indicated the only roof issues have been outby with the 150 foot centers.

Board member Willis still concerned about tailgate ventilation and problems that could result from roof issues.

Board member Jones asked about dust being picked with velocity of air from the increased length. Safety Director, Mike Hathaway, state the company felt this was not a problem as there were controls in place.

The agency's state mine inspector Larry Jenkel was asked about his opinion on the proposal. Mr. Jenkel was not impressed with the company's development using 200 foot centers especially on maintaining proper ventilation and problems with managing materials.

Mr. Jenkel felt the north/south orientation of the mine increased the risk of roof falls.

Mr. Bennett stated the intent of this request was to improve safety through increased roof stability, reducing horizontal stress and improving ventilation.

The company would like to eliminate the roof control issues created from north/south direction but are tied to the mains already developed in a north and south direction.

It was agreed that the company could have material prepared for the October meeting.

Another issue Hamilton County Coal wished to address was the staggered blocks on the main north entries. This was an area where horizontal stress is a factor. The company is staggering the cross cuts thereby reducing four intersections. It is the company's belief this process is complying with state law.

Executive Officer Hafliger stated this was not an agenda item, therefore could not be voted on by the Board but a discussion could be held on the issue.

Bill Patterson told the company representatives you cannot change the mine plans without prior approval of the agency and/or Board. This change should have been sent through the mine's state mine inspector.

Executive Officer stated an operator should be proactive instead of reactive. If you are unsure whether what you are considering needs to be reviewed by the Office of Mines and Minerals, give a call to your inspector.

Having no further business Board member Lewis made a motion to adjourn, second by Board member Smith and motion passed.