


**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**  
**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

Subject:		Number:	
Governor's Commission on Abandoned Mine Voids and Mine Safety		2002-10	
Date:	Distribution:	By Direction Of:	
September 4, 2002	B	 Mark S. Schweiker, Governor	

- WHEREAS, on July 24, 2002, miners at Quecreek Mining Company's mine in Lincoln Township, Somerset County, unexpectedly encountered flooded abandoned mine workings; and
- WHEREAS, although nine members of one crew in the mine escaped, the intrushing waters trapped another nine miners who were miraculously saved after a more than 77 hour rescue effort; and
- WHEREAS, the U. S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Deep Mine Safety joint investigation of the actual events at the Quecreek Mine will determine specific follow-up enforcement actions with respect to that specific accident; and
- WHEREAS, the Department of Environmental Protection has already taken steps to notify existing mine owners to verify the location of abandoned mine voids in close proximity to their operations; and
- WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania miners and their families need to be assured that existing and future mines are safe from flooding and other hazards associated with the inaccurate location of mine voids; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's coal mining industry cannot continue to operate safely and contribute to the economy of the Commonwealth without knowing the location of abandoned mine voids.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mark S. Schweiker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other laws, do hereby establish the **Governor's Commission on Abandoned Mine Voids and Mine Safety**, as hereinafter set forth:

**1. Mission.** To investigate and document the hazards posed by abandoned mine voids, in particular the flooding of adjacent operating mines, and to make recommendations regarding the accurate location of voids and avoidance of other hazards associated with mining.

**2. Functions.** Using the accident at Quecreek Mine as a general reference, make recommendations regarding each of the following:

**a.** The best engineering practices to be used in the design and layout of modern mines adjacent to abandoned mine workings.

**b.** The regulatory policies and permit review procedures for permitting mines adjacent to abandoned underground mine workings.

**c.** The practices and procedures of mine operations in advance of mining to detect mine voids.

**d.** The training of mine workers who operate mines adjacent to underground mine workings.

**e.** The inspection and compliance of the mine operations with the approved mine plans and operating requirements.

**f.** The rescue and response procedures which shall include policies for sharing information with families of miners affected by the accident.

**3. Composition of the Commission.** The Commission shall consist of the following nine members appointed by the Governor:

**a.** A respected mine engineer and member of academia familiar with underground mining, who shall serve as Chair.

**b.** Member of the United Mine Workers' Association.

**c.** Mine engineer/surveyor.

**d.** Geologist.

**e.** Representative of the Office for Mineral Resources Management of the Department of Environmental Protection.

**f.** Mine safety professional.

**g.** Coal mine operator.

**h.** Drilling expert.

**i.** Emergency response professional.

#### **4. Terms of Membership.**

**a.** Members shall be appointed to serve until November 15, 2002, unless the Commission is reestablished or dissolved sooner. All members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

**b.** Should a vacancy occur due to resignation, disability, or death of a member, the Governor shall appoint a successor as expeditiously as possible and the successor shall serve the duration of the unexpired term.

**5. Compensation.** Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their service, except that such members may be reimbursed for actual travel and related expenses in accordance with the Commonwealth Travel and Subsistence Regulations.

**6. Meetings and Communication.** The Commission shall interview and solicit testimony from experts and citizens to gather information for this investigation. The Commission shall hold public hearings for the purpose of gathering information.

**7. Reports.** The Commission shall report on current mining practices and regulatory policies and provide recommendations to improve safety when mines are adjacent to abandoned mine workings. By November 15, 2002, the Commission shall present, for the Governor's review and approval, a written report of the Commission's activities and a detailed report including any dissenting opinions of the Commission's findings and recommendations.

**8. Executive Agencies.** All agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction shall cooperate with and provide assistance as needed to the Commission in performing its functions. The Commission will receive administrative support from the Department of Environmental Protection.

**9. Effective Date.** This Executive Order shall be effective immediately.

**10. Termination Date.** This Executive Order shall terminate on November 15, 2002, unless reestablished or sooner rescinded.