

Zatezalo Wants MSHA to Represent All Operations

MSHA Administrator David Zatezalo outlined priorities for the agency during a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections on Feb. 6. “Safety remains a major priority for this committee,” said Chairman Bradley Byrne, R-Ala. “We ask so much of these hardworking Americans, and vital policies are in place to provide them with the safest environment possible.”

Zatezalo addressed inconsistencies among MSHA inspectors when questioned by Rep. Virginia Foxx, R-N.C., chairwoman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Zatezalo said that MSHA is working to establish a single, agency-wide opinion when it comes to regulating operations among its 15 different districts.

NSSGA was encouraged by Zatezalo’s remarks about the importance of the aggregates-dominated, metal/non-metal segment of the industry. “Historically, and as a former miner myself, MSHA has been typically viewed as a coal-centric organization. As we move forward, it has to be viewed as more of a mining-centric organization,” Zatezalo said. Foxx and Zatezalo agreed that the agency needs to be able to handle the modern demographics of the industry. There are nearly 10 times as many metal/nonmetal operations than coal mines in the country, and 240,000 metal/nonmetal employees versus 83,000 coal miners.

A number of good questions were posed about compliance assistance for small quarries by lawmakers. Zatezalo also affirmed that small operations will remain a priority for the agency in response to questioning by Rep. Karen Handel, R-Ga.

Watch the hearing at https://youtu.be/Ke_z5vEH5Is?t=31m24s



MSHA Administrator Zatezalo

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