

Re: Case No. 12-51502

I

The Honorable Kathy A. Surratt-States
Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse
111 South 10th Street 4th Floor
St. Louis, Mo. 63102

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JAN 24 2013

U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

Before reading this letter, I want to express appreciation for you taking a few minutes of your valuable time in addressing a matter of deep concern dealing with the bankruptcy case involving Patriot Coal Co. A decision that will affect numerous workers, retirees, communities, family members and businesses of coal miners now and in the future days to come.

I, James C. Cook Jr., have worked in the coal mining industry for over thirty-four years. A question that you are asking so many. Why did you go to work in the mining industry to begin with? Well, when one grows up in a community located in eastern Ky., mining was the major and most profitable at the time and one tends to follow in family footsteps. Dad worked for Peabody Coal for well over twenty-two years. He began working in the mines at only eighteen years of age. He continued to work up until his death when he was fifty-eight years of age. Working

in those dangerous, dusty condition plus the threat of black lung takes a terrible toll on its workers. My father and I also worked for Peabody Coal Co., he with thirty six years and I with thirty four. So as a family we worked over ninety years alone with Peabody Coal Co. We were proud to say that we worked for Peabody until recently. I can remember a representative from Peabody, speaking at a scheduled meeting, officials from the company, active miners and their wives, telling us: that its most valuable assets were its employees.

Dad would always tell us over and over that he preferred that his sons not to work in the mines. But as I stated earlier mining was almost the best alternative and Peabody he thought was the best company to work for when he was alive. He, until his death told us: once you started, stick with it. Someday if you are able to acquire enough years of service, Peabody had agreed to honor a commitment to provide hospitalization, medical and pension benefits to its retirees. A mad case that was almost impossible because of mine closures, contract negotiations with coal buyers and the union resulting in lay-offs.

I began working for Peabody in 1971. Through the years I've worked for numerous Peabody mines. Ken Underground, Martwick, Collette Hybrid, Camp Complex mine, I, II, IV, VI, Big Run and Peabody Highland mine have been the majority of those during my career. Why so many one might ask? When coal reserves become exhausted on the mines were not profitable, they were closed. So because of the union and if you were a good employee; one that worked hard and was dependable, you might get an opportunity to go elsewhere.

Peabody Coal company has been a successful company for many years. Their acquisition of a vast number of companies with all mineral rights that were attained gives you an idea of just how large this company grew. Almost one hundred years of doing business successfully, Peabody suddenly loses money after transferring its operations to one of its subsidiaries.

Your honor, even though my father passed before retiring, his widow and our mother has been able to live after going through two heart surgeries, only because of medical insurance provided by that promise that he and we have worked for. I cannot imagine the devastation of the

loss of medical, pension and hospitalization benefits for our active and non active miners.

This will be such a tragic loss for the thousands and thousands in and around the coal mining communities. I request, for everyone's sake the situation things have gotten into. If this is allowed to take place, what will stop other companies not only in mining but many other industries from doing the same process. I can understand the President of the United States in his inaugural address speaking to the nation that we need to protect our workers that got us here as well as the workers of the future.

Thank you for your time
May God Bless you and yours
Sincerely

James C. Cook Jr.
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Some of the older retirees, retirees that are so dependant on this life support promises - a loss would be comparable to taking them off a machine needed for survival.

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CLERK, US BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI-MR

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