

Far from pro-coal

August 2, 2012 12:13 am

In his July 19 Perspectives piece "[Our Pro-Coal President](#)," United Steelworkers president Leo Gerard uses Orwellian logic to invert the facts behind administration policies that Democrats as well as Republicans have likened to a "war on coal." In Pennsylvania, one company has just idled five mines affecting 225 permanent employees and in eastern Kentucky alone some 1,500 miners have recently lost their jobs in 23 counties.

The Environmental Protection Agency's power plant regulations have already led utilities to retire 20 percent of generating capacity with more closures on the way. With 92 percent of coal mined in this country going to electricity generation, the impact on coal mining employment should be obvious.

Future coal plants are also targeted. United Mine Workers of America president Cecil Roberts condemned EPA's greenhouse gas rule as a "decision by the EPA that we're never going to have another coal-fired facility in the United States." Without new plants there can be no development of the new clean coal technology that the administration claims to support. That's bad news for Mr. Gerard's steel workers, since new advanced coal plants generate more construction jobs than any other type of power plant.

EPA officials blithely admit "few, if any" new mines will be able to meet its new policy on coal permits. The federal Office of Surface Mining is working on a regulation that would destroy more than 17,000 high-wage coal mining jobs merely to replace recently updated stream protection rules.

Coal has a lot working for it -- including abundance, affordability and high-wage jobs -- but not this administration.

HAL QUINN
CEO
National Mining Association
Washington, D.C

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