



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 31, 2002

I send greetings to those gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. This important Act also established the Office of Surface Mining in the United States Department of the Interior to carry out the purposes of the Act.

For a quarter of a century, under the authority of the Act, the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining has worked effectively with coal mining states to assure that coal mine operations protect citizens and the environment. It has also ensured that the land is restored to beneficial use following mining activities. Since the enactment, the Office of Surface Mining has provided nearly \$1 billion in grants to the States and Indian Tribes to assist in funding the regulation of active coal mines. In addition, since 1979, the Office of Surface Mining has provided over \$3 billion in grants to the States and Tribes to clean up coal mine sites abandoned before the Act was signed.

Through the years, the Office of Surface Mining has earned a proud record of working cooperatively with States, Tribes, the coal industry, and citizens groups. During this time, coal production has dramatically increased, on-the-ground reclamation achievements are far beyond 1977 expectations, and the quality of life for coal-field citizens is higher than ever. All Americans have benefited from this success, and should join in celebrating the achievements of this historic legislation.

Best wishes for a memorable 25th anniversary celebration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn Baul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.