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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3405

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Kevin Cramer
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Dear Kevin:

Thank you for contacting me about funding for state coal regulatory programs through the Office of Surface Mining (OSM).

As you may know, the Senate adopted its version of the FY 2006 Interior bill. As the Ranking Member, I worked to ensure that the bill contained \$298 million, including \$188 million for the abandoned mine reclamation fund and \$110 million for regulation and technology activities. This amount is an increase of \$2 million over last year's level.

That said, the President's FY2006 budget was a real disappointment. Along with his proposal to eliminate or significantly reduce more than 150 federal programs, the President is also proposing an enormous budget deficit. And the budget omits a substantial amount of spending he knows will occur with respect to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, his proposal to make the tax cuts permanent and much, much more.

This has made funding difficult in the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee and I anticipate it will be even more difficult when the Senate and House work out their differences in conference.

Having said that, I will look for opportunities to provide additional funding as the appropriations process moves forward. Thanks again for contacting me.

Sincerely,

Byron L. Dorgan
U.S. Senator