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NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR SIGNS NATURAL GAS GIVEAWAY Bill Will Hurt Energy Consumers and Result in Job Losses

Denver, CO - The Colorado Mining Association (CMA) today condemned the enactment of House Bill 10-1365, legislation crafted behind closed doors and rushed through the legislature with little opportunity for study or debate, which will replace Front Range power plants currently using high quality, clean Colorado coal with higher cost natural gas.

Stuart Sanderson, CMA President, said “today marks a sad day for the state’s coal miners, railroad and utility workers,” as it will result in hundreds of lost jobs. “It will also hurt energy consumers as the cost of natural gas exceeds that of coal by 300%,” he added.

CMA expressed regret that legislative leaders and proponents of the measure refused to work with industry on crafting possible compromise legislation that would have required the Public Utilities Commission and other agencies to study the impacts on Colorado’s economy and energy costs. “Despite these efforts, legislative leadership rejected all compromise amendments and refused to engage in any meaningful discussion or negotiation of the terms of HB 1365,” CMA said.

“Today is a victory for natural gas special interests, which negotiated this bargain in secrecy with the Governor, Xcel Energy and anti-coal activists,” CMA added. Important consumer and other constituencies were also left in the dark. “The manner in which this bill was negotiated and rushed through the legislature speaks volumes about its flaws and about the integrity of the process,” Sanderson added.

“This legislation is decidedly anti-coal,” Sanderson added, notwithstanding the arguments of its proponents to the contrary. “It will hurt Colorado coal production, which already suffered dramatic losses in 2009,” he said. “Proponents erroneously contend that Colorado will not suffer major impacts as we sell coal on the export market, but sales of export coal have dropped by nearly 6 million tons in just one year,” he reported, according to figures released by the Colorado Mining Association. Export sales (outside the state) were down by more than 27% to slightly more than 16 million tons. Exports now account for 58% of Colorado coal sales. 42% of Colorado coal is sold in state, a market that has remained steady over the years, until passage of HB 1365.

“HB 1365 takes away 2.6 million tons of Colorado coal currently being sold to Front Range generating units at Cherokee and Valmont,” Sanderson stated. “It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that you cannot market that coal outside the state when those markets are declining,” he added.

As CMA noted in its news release dated March 30, the bill will also not solve Colorado’s air quality problems. A copy of that release is provided.

CMA wishes to thank the representatives from both parties who stood tall in opposing this bill. Sanderson expressed special appreciation to Representatives Randy Baumgardner and Kathleen Curry, as well as Senator Al White, who recognize the importance of mining to their districts and to Colorado. CMA also thanks Senators Shawn Mitchell and Keith King, who helped lead the opposition in the Senate.

CMA is an industry organization, founded in 1876, whose more than 900 members include producers of coal and other minerals, as well as individuals and organizations providing services, equipment and supplies to this industry. CMA’s membership includes energy consumers both large and small.