

**FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION**

1331 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW, SUITE 520N

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004-1710

April 11, 2014

SECRETARY OF LABOR,  
MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH  
ADMINISTRATION (MSHA)

v.

WARRIOR COAL, LLC

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Docket No. KENT 2013-703  
A.C. No. 15-17216-313707

BEFORE: Jordan, Chairman; Young, Cohen, Nakamura, and Althen, Commissioners

ORDER

BY THE COMMISSION:

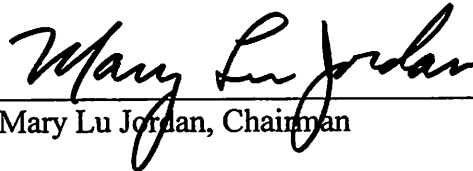
This matter arises under the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq. (2012) (“Mine Act”). On April 26, 2013, the Commission received from Warrior Coal, LLC (“Warrior”) a motion seeking to reopen a penalty assessment that had become a final order of the Commission pursuant to section 105(a) of the Mine Act, 30 U.S.C. § 815(a).

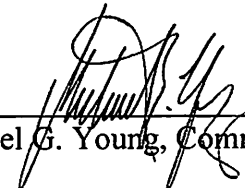
Under section 105(a) of the Mine Act, an operator who wishes to contest a proposed penalty must notify the Secretary of Labor no later than 30 days after receiving the proposed penalty assessment. If the operator fails to notify the Secretary, the proposed penalty assessment is deemed a final order of the Commission. 30 U.S.C. § 815(a).

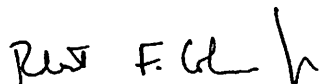
We have held, however, that in appropriate circumstances, we possess jurisdiction to reopen uncontested assessments that have become final Commission orders under section 105(a). *Jim Walter Res., Inc.*, 15 FMSHRC 782, 786-89 (May 1993) (“*JWR*”). In evaluating requests to reopen final orders, the Commission has found guidance in Rule 60(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure under which the Commission may relieve a party from a final order of the Commission on the basis of mistake, inadvertence, excusable neglect, or other reason justifying relief. *See* 29 C.F.R. § 2700.1(b) (“the Commission and its Judges shall be guided so far as practicable by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure”); *JWR*, 15 FMSHRC at 787. We have also observed that default is a harsh remedy and that, if the defaulting party can make a showing of good cause for a failure to timely respond, the case may be reopened and appropriate proceedings on the merits permitted. *See Coal Prep. Servs., Inc.*, 17 FMSHRC 1529, 1530 (Sept. 1995).

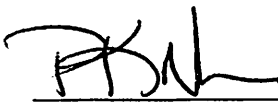
Records of the Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration ("MSHA") indicate that the proposed assessment was delivered on February 13, 2013, and became a final order of the Commission on March 15, 2013. Warrior asserts that due to an unknown error in its internal mail delivery, the assessment was not transferred to its safety department. Warrior was notified of the delinquency by its accounting department. Warrior states that it has taken steps to ensure that the transfer of mail between facilities will not affect future timely filing of penalty contests. The Secretary does not oppose the request to reopen and notes that Warrior filed this motion to reopen before MSHA mailed a delinquency notice on April 30, 2013.

Having reviewed Warrior's request and the Secretary's response, in the interest of justice, we hereby reopen this matter and remand it to the Chief Administrative Law Judge for further proceedings pursuant to the Mine Act and the Commission's Procedural Rules, 29 C.F.R. Part 2700. Accordingly, consistent with Rule 28, the Secretary shall file a petition for assessment of penalty within 45 days of the date of this order. *See* 29 C.F.R. § 2700.28.

  
Mary Lu Jordan, Chairman

  
Michael G. Young, Commissioner

  
Robert F. Cohen, Jr., Commissioner

  
Patrick K. Nakamura, Commissioner

  
William I. Althen, Commissioner

Distribution:

Gary D. McCollum, Esq.  
Tyler H. Fields Esq.  
Warrior Coal, LLC  
771 Corporate Drive, Suite 500  
Lexington, KY 40503  
[tyler.fields@arlp.com](mailto:tyler.fields@arlp.com)

Melanie Garris  
Office of Civil Penalty Compliance  
MSHA  
U.S. Dept. Of Labor  
1100 Wilson Blvd., 25<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Arlington, VA 22209-3939

W. Christian Schumann, Esq.  
Office of the Solicitor  
U.S. Department of Labor  
1100 Wilson Blvd., Room 2220  
Arlington, VA 22209-2296

Chief Administrative Law Judge Robert J. Lesnick  
Federal Mine Safety & Health Review Commission  
1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W., Suite 520N  
Washington, D.C. 20004-1710