

Id. at Ex. 1.¹

Stech's counsel states that the return receipt for the proposed assessment indicates that it was delivered to and signed for by Penny Reddy, who according to counsel is employed by a company in the same building as his firm, but which is on a different floor altogether and is not related to his firm in any way. *Id.* at 2. Counsel for Stech only learned of the proposed assessment on August 1, 2005 when counsel for the Secretary in a related matter provided him a copy. *Id.* In his motion, Stech states that he "intended to contest the penalty and underlying citation." *Id.* The Secretary does not oppose Stech's request for relief.

Here, the proposed penalty assessment was delivered to the wrong address. Under these circumstances, we conclude that Stech was not notified of the penalty assessment, within the meaning of the Commission's Procedural Rules, until at least August 1, 2005. In his motion to reopen this matter, filed with the Commission on August 8, 2005, Stech clearly states his intent to contest the proposed penalty assessment against him. We conclude from this that Stech timely notified the Secretary that he wished to contest the proposed penalty, once he had actual notice of the proposed assessment. *Id.*

¹ In another case we are deciding today, *Neil et al. employed by Elk Run Coal Co.*, Docket Nos. WEVA 2005-173 through WEVA 2005-176, we note that Commission Procedural Rule 25 states that the "Secretary, by certified mail, shall notify . . . any other person against whom a penalty is proposed of the violation alleged." Slip op. at 2 (citing 29 C.F.R. § 2700.25). In *Neil*, and now in this case, confusion has arisen from the manner in which proposed penalty assessments were sent to section 110(c) respondents. If the Secretary had sent the penalty proposal at issue here to Stech at his home address or "in care of" counsel at counsel's address, the confusion would presumably have been avoided.

Accordingly, the proposed penalty assessment is not a final order of the Commission. We remand this matter to the Chief Administrative Law Judge for assignment to a judge. This case shall proceed pursuant to the Mine Act and the Commission's Procedural Rules, 29 C.F.R. Part 2700.

Michael F. Duffy, Chairman

Mary Lu Jordan, Commissioner

Stanley C. Suboleski, Commissioner

Michael G. Young, Commissioner

Distribution

R. Henry Moore, Esq.
Jackson Kelly, PLLC
Three Gateway Center, Suite 1340
401 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

W. Christian Schumann, Esq.
Office of the Solicitor
U.S. Department of Labor
1100 Wilson Blvd., 22nd Floor West
Arlington, VA 22209-2247

Chief Administrative Law Judge Robert J. Lesnick
Federal Mine Safety & Health Review Commission
Office of Administrative Law Judges
601 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Suite 9500
Washington, D.C. 20001-2021