



20 September 2017

On behalf of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Global Methane Initiative, I would like to convey my congratulations to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Ministry of Land and Resources, the Government of Shanxi Province, and the Shanxi Coking Coal Group, on the official opening of the International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane in China. The inauguration of the Centre is the culmination of many years' hard work of many members of the UNECE Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and others in this room. In particular, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Mr. David Creedy, whose vision and determination has made today a reality.

Over the last ten years, the EPA, GMI and the UNECE have worked collaboratively to reduce methane emissions from coal mining activities and improve mine safety. And while the mining industry has become much safer in recent years, recent tragedies continue to underscore the need for continued diligence to improve safety while furthering efforts to educate regulators, operators, staff and other stakeholders on best practices. As the world's leading coal producing nation and the country with the largest share of coal mine methane emissions, China has a natural role to play in promoting mine safety through more effective methane capture and use. The Centre provides an excellent forum to convey best practices and lessons learned from experience gained by Chinese mining companies, government officials, and international experts over the last 15 years as considerable progress has been made in improving mine safety and reducing methane emissions.

In addition to safety issues, methane emissions are also a significant source of air pollution locally and globally. Capturing and using methane provides so many benefits in addition to improved air quality: energy production, job creation, investment in research and development, and commercial development. From state of the art in-mine and surface drilling rigs to deployment of modern, high-efficiency gas-fired power plants, CMM projects support much-needed economic development in coal producing regions.

Again, congratulations to you all. We look forward to working with you to improve mine safety and reduce coal mine methane emissions. I have no doubt that the International Centre of Excellence will be a leader in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Felicia A. Ruiz".

Felicia A. Ruiz
Co-Chair, GMI Coal Subcommittee
Climate Change Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency