

BRB No. 11-0781 BLA

OMA M. BAILEY)
(Widow of JAMES BAILEY))
)
 Claimant-Respondent)
)
 v.)
) DATE ISSUED: 06/22/2012
 CANNELTON INDUSTRIES,)
 INCORPORATED)
)
 Employer-Petitioner)
)
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF WORKERS')
 COMPENSATION PROGRAMS, UNITED)
 STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR)
)
 Party-in-Interest) DECISION and ORDER

Appeal of the Decision and Order of Richard A. Morgan, Administrative Law Judge, United States Department of Labor.

Roger D. Forman (The Law Office of Roger D. Forman, L.C.), Charleston, West Virginia, for claimant.

William S. Mattingly (Jackson Kelly PLLC), Morgantown, West Virginia, for employer.

Sarah M. Hurley (M. Patricia Smith, Solicitor of Labor; Rae Ellen James, Associate Solicitor; Michael J. Rutledge, Counsel for Administrative Litigation and Legal Advice), Washington, D.C., for the Director, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, United States Department of Labor.

Before: DOLDER, Chief Administrative Appeals Judge, SMITH and HALL, Administrative Appeals Judges.

PER CURIAM:

Employer appeals the Decision and Order (11-BLA-5761) of Administrative Law Judge Richard A. Morgan awarding benefits on a survivor's claim¹ filed pursuant to the provisions of the Black Lung Benefits Act, 30 U.S.C. §§901-944 (2006), *amended by* Pub. L. No. 111-148, §1556, 124 Stat. 119 (2010) (to be codified at 30 U.S.C. §§921(c)(4) and 932(l)) (the Act).

On March 23, 2010, amendments to the Act affecting claims filed after January 1, 2005, were enacted. The amendments, in pertinent part, revive Section 932(l) of the Act, which provides that a survivor of a miner who was determined to be eligible to receive benefits at the time of his or her death is automatically entitled to survivor's benefits without having to establish that the miner's death was due to pneumoconiosis. Pub. L. No. 111-148, §1556(b) (to be codified at 30 U.S.C. §932(l)).

Claimant filed her survivor's claim on February 7, 2011. Director's Exhibit 3. On February 14, 2011, the district director issued a Proposed Decision and Order, wherein she found that claimant was derivatively entitled to benefits pursuant to amended Section 932(l). Director's Exhibit 7. At employer's request, the case was forwarded to the Office of Administrative Law Judges for a formal hearing.

On June 10, 2011, the Director, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (the Director), moved for a summary decision, arguing that there was no genuine issue of material fact concerning whether claimant was automatically entitled to benefits pursuant to amended Section 932(l). Employer filed a response in opposition to the Director's motion for a summary decision.

In a Decision and Order dated July 19, 2011, the administrative law judge found that claimant satisfied the eligibility criteria for automatic entitlement to benefits pursuant to amended Section 932(l). Accordingly, the administrative law judge awarded survivor's benefits, commencing as of May 2010, the month in which the miner died.

On appeal, employer challenges the constitutionality of amended Section 932(l), and its application to this claim. Claimant responds in support of the administrative law judge's award of benefits. The Director also responds, urging the Board to affirm the administrative law judge's award of benefits.

¹ Claimant is the widow of the miner, who died on May 8, 2010. Director's Exhibit 6. At the time of his death, the miner was receiving federal black lung benefits pursuant to an award on his lifetime claim. Director's Exhibit 1.

The Board's scope of review is defined by statute. The administrative law judge's Decision and Order must be affirmed if it is rational, supported by substantial evidence, and in accordance with applicable law.² 33 U.S.C. §921(b)(3), as incorporated by 30 U.S.C. §932(a); *O'Keeffe v. Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Associates, Inc.*, 380 U.S. 359 (1965).

Employer argues that retroactive application of amended Section 932(l) is unconstitutional, as a violation of employer's due process rights and as an unlawful taking of employer's property, in violation of the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Employer also contends that the operative date for determining eligibility under amended Section 932(l) is the date the miner's claim was filed, not the date the survivor's claim was filed. The arguments that employer makes are virtually identical to the ones that the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit recently rejected. *W. Va. CWP Fund v. Stacy*, 671 F.3d 378, 383-89 (4th Cir. 2011), *aff'g Stacy v. Olga Coal Co.*, 24 BLR 1-207 (2010); *see also B&G Constr. Co. v. Director, OWCP [Campbell]*, 662 F.3d 233, 254-63 (3d Cir. 2011). For the reasons set forth in *Stacy*, we reject employer's arguments. We also reject employer's request that this case be held in abeyance pending resolution of the legal challenges to Public Law No. 111-148. *See Stacy*, 671 F.3d at 383 n.2; *Mathews v. United Pocahontas Coal Co.*, 24 BLR 1-193, 1-201 (2010), *recon. denied*, BRB No. 09-0666 BLA (Apr. 14, 2011) (Order), *appeal docketed*, No. 11-1620 (4th Cir. June 13, 2011) (unpub.).

In this case, claimant satisfied her burden to establish each fact necessary to demonstrate her entitlement under amended Section 932(l): that she filed her claim after January 1, 2005; that she is an eligible survivor of the miner; that her claim was pending after March 23, 2010; and that the miner was determined to be eligible to receive benefits at the time of his death. Therefore, we affirm the administrative law judge's determination that claimant is derivatively entitled to benefits pursuant to amended Section 932(l). 30 U.S.C. §932(l).

² The record reflects that claimant's coal mine employment was in West Virginia. Director's Exhibit 1. Accordingly, this case arises within the jurisdiction of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. *See Shupe v. Director, OWCP*, 12 BLR 1-200 (1989) (en banc).

Accordingly, the administrative law judge's Decision and Order awarding benefits is affirmed.

SO ORDERED.

NANCY S. DOLDER, Chief
Administrative Appeals Judge

ROY P. SMITH
Administrative Appeals Judge

BETTY JEAN HALL
Administrative Appeals Judge