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**MINE** Update  
MINING INDUSTRY NEWS E-COMM UPDATE

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Issue 9 | November 25, 2020

Brought to you by the National Mining Association

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## **This Week in The News**

With the U.S. House and Senate both out of session for the Thanksgiving holiday this week, Appropriations Committee staff are working on a possible omnibus spending agreement to prevent a government shutdown on December 11. It remained unclear whether the omnibus might be expanded to include COVID relief measures. Regardless of the outcome, the National Mining Association (NMA) remained engaged with efforts to advance mining's interests with both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Plus we have updates on how energy and mining markets are faring.

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## **Safety Share**

The U.S. Fire Administration has tips on how to [prevent a turkey fryer fire](#) while preparing your delicious Thanksgiving feast.

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## All Eyes on Georgia

On Tuesday, December 1, NMA's MINE PAC, COAL PAC and many of our companies and executives are hosting a fundraiser for Senator Kelly Loeffler. The NMA and its members are heavily involved and invested in the remaining two Senate races for the 2020 election cycle. NMA's fundraiser for Senator Perdue was a big success. Senator Loeffler will also be on the ballot on January 5. These two races remain crucial to the control of the Senate next year and to ensuring that NMA members have a meaningful seat at the table in bipartisan policy discussions.

We ask your companies to strongly consider contributing to Senator Loeffler. Please hold Tuesday, December 1 at 2:30pm ET for a fundraiser with Senator Loeffler. The invitation and contribution information can be found below.



Please join  
**MINE PAC & COAL PAC**  
for a virtual event with special guest

# Senator Kelly Loeffler | R-GA

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020**  
**2:30 - 3:00 PM EST**  
**ZOOM**

Dial-In Instructions Provided Upon RSVP

## SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION AMOUNTS:

<b>SPONSOR</b> \$5,000 PAC \$2,800 personal	<b>HOST</b> \$2,500 PAC \$1,000 personal	<b>ATTENDEE</b> \$1,000 PAC \$500 personal
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RSVP to Brittney Godoy: [Brittney@sockostrategies.com](mailto:Brittney@sockostrategies.com) or 334-328-8901

**Please make contributions payable to:** Georgians for Kelly Loeffler  
**Mail to:** 4323 Cathedral Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016  
**Give online:** [Click Here](#)

Paid for by Georgians for Kelly Loeffler.

Contributions to Georgians for Kelly Loeffler are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. An individual may contribute up to \$2,800 designated for the special general run-off election. Federal multi-candidate PACs may contribute up to \$5,000 for the special general run-off election. Contributions from corporations, labor unions, federal-government contractors, national banks, and foreign nationals who are not lawfully admitted for permanent residence are prohibited. Federal law requires Georgians for Kelly Loeffler to use best efforts to report the name, mailing address, occupation, and employer of persons whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in an election cycle.

Not printed at government expense.

## **FPISC Proposal to Include Mining As FAST-41 Sector Expected This Week**

In an action long-advocated by the NMA, the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (FPISC) is expected to propose a rule late this week to include mining as a covered sector eligible for the expedited permitting process available under section 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST-41). Enacted in 2015, FAST-41 created FPISC to improve the timeliness, predictability, and transparency of the federal environmental review and authorization process for covered infrastructure projects. Improving our nation's infrastructure will increase access to raw materials made available through domestic mining and is an important step to addressing permitting delays targeting the mining industry. While the FPISC voted to include mining as a sector early this year, the proposal will codify that vote while addressing legal concerns raised by White House counsel.

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## **EPA Advancing Groundwater Guidance**

Earlier this week, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sent a proposed guidance on groundwater permitting to the Office of Management and Budget for interagency review. The NMA identified the release of the guidance as a top priority for the Trump administration given the growing confusion over when discharges to groundwater are subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act. The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in *County of Maui v. Hawaii Wildlife Fund* only served to exacerbate the existing confusion, making the need for guidance more urgent. The NMA will advocate for expedited consideration and release of the EPA guidance.

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## Transition News

The Biden transition team now has access to federal government office space, equipment and briefing resources to facilitate a transition in administrations. With this announcement, [transition teams](#) will begin meeting with Trump administration departments and agency leadership throughout the federal government to collect information and begin briefing potential incoming political appointees concerning programs within the federal agencies.

Also this week, President-elect [Biden began naming future Senate-confirmed nominees](#) to initial federal departments such as Antony Blinken to Secretary of State, Janet Yellen to Secretary of the Treasury, Alexandro Mayorkas to Secretary of Homeland Security, Avril Haines to be the Director of National Intelligence, and career foreign service officer Linda Thomas-Greenfield to be UN Ambassador. Biden also announced former Secretary of State and U.S. Senator John Kerry to be his climate envoy, Jake Sullivan as his national security advisor and head of the National Security Council, among other key White House personnel responsible for presidential personnel, legislative affairs and public engagement. NMA will continue to reach out and develop new working relationships with incoming transition and appointed officials, educating and advocating for NMA member priorities in the lead up to the new administration.

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## Bipartisan Spending Deal in the Works

With White House backing, congressional negotiators are continuing to push for a massive \$1.4 trillion spending package that would provide fresh funding for all federal agencies before the end of the year. House and Senate Appropriations staffs continue to trade offers to finalize top lines for all 12 fiscal 2021 bills during the Thanksgiving recess in the hopes of having legislation nearly ready for a vote when lawmakers return next week. Current government funding expires on December 11, but Congress is widely anticipated to approve a clean one-week continuing resolution through December 18 to continue negotiations.

Late last week, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows gave some public indications that the Trump administration could support an omnibus spending bill. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said an omnibus was his "hope" and that he would "come together" with Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on the matter. Without a deal, lawmakers would need to pass stopgap spending for agencies or face a federal shutdown.

There were also leadership discussions about the chances of at least some pandemic relief riding on the package. Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Al.) said not to expect a big pandemic package, but he did not rule out targeted relief related to the virus. Possible items under consideration include more funding tied to developing and distributing vaccines, an extra 13 weeks of federal unemployment benefits, and more spending for the Paycheck Protection Program.

A deal could pave the way for other major items to be resolved before the end of 2020 such as the National Defense Authorization (NDAA) and expiring tax measures.

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### NMA and Third-Party Voices

The NMA was featured in a variety of stories over the past week.

[Politico](#) quotes Rich Nolan in its report that Sen. John Barrasso is poised to take the top spot at the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. NMA is also quoted in [S&P Global](#)'s report on the same topic.

[International Mining](#) quotes Rich Nolan in its coverage of the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration's (MSHA) proposed revisions to standards that could speed up the testing of electric motor-driven mine equipment and accessories in underground mines.

In an [Inside Sources](#) feature, also published in the [Prescott ENews](#), NMA responded to climate activist concerns that the race to transition Americans to electric vehicles is on a collision course with anti-mining and zero emissions agendas, noting that, given the rigorous regulation in the US, those who care about the environment should be doing more to encourage domestic mining projects, rather than pushing them abroad.

[Ringside Politics](#) (NAT) and [The Jeff Oravitz Show](#) (AZ) both interviewed Rich Nolan on the alarming state of minerals supply chains.

[E&E News](#) quotes the NMA in a report on the news that five Democratic senators from Appalachian states urged the Labor Department on Friday to take up recommendations by the inspector general to set a new standard to limit coal miners' exposure to silica.

Looking to the NMA's third parties, [Somerset Daily American](#) (PA), [Rockford Register Star](#) (IL), [Pottstown Mercury](#) (PA), [Lansdale Reporter](#) (PA), [Exton Daily Local](#) (PA), [Delaware County Daily Times](#) (PA), [Swarthmore Times Herald](#) (PA), [Mainline Media News](#) (PA), [Phoenix Reporter and Item](#) (PA), [Montgomery News](#) (PA), [Fort Myers News Press](#) (FL), [Naples Daily News](#) (FL), [Deseret News](#) (UT), [MSN](#) (USA), [Bakersfield Californian](#) (CA), [Towanda Daily Review](#) (PA) and [Elko Daily Free Press](#) (NV) all carried an op-ed by Kevin Kearns, president of the U.S. Business and Industry Council, in which he argues President-elect Joe Biden's plans require an increase in U.S. mining.

[RealClearEnergy](#) (DC) carried an op-ed by James Clad, a former deputy assistant

secretary of defense for Asia, in which he argues America's industrial economy remains resilient, and a growing bipartisan consensus has emerged favoring the use of government policy to bolster manufacturing competitiveness and innovation.

[The National Review](#) (NAT) and [Providence Journal](#) (RI) ran a pair of op-eds by Mackubin Owens in which he argues the United States needs to develop a "commercially viable" minerals supply chain to address China's dominance of critical minerals.

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## Energy and Mining News

[S&P Global reported](#) that mining companies remain bullish despite the surge in corona virus cases heading in to winter, noting that "analysts expect positive commodity news, such as a rising gold price, to keep flowing as the sector heads into 2021." The election and news of progress on the vaccine have helped buoy market confidence.

[Mining.com reported](#) on recent World Platinum Investment Council quarterly [analysis](#) indicating that "despite strong quarter-on-quarter recovery in supply, the global platinum market is set to experience a second consecutive year of deficit at just over 1.2 million ounces in 2020."

[Mining.com reported](#) that copper prices surged to a new 2-year high on Friday following positive reports on [covid-19 vaccine breakthroughs](#) from Pfizer and Moderna.

[The International Copper Study Group](#) (ICSG) reported in their recent monthly copper bulletin that global copper mine production was down in April through May due to COVID-19 related shutdowns, but ICSG notes that "mine production started to recover in May as lockdown measures eased and the copper industry adapted to the strict health protocols."

[Utility Dive reports](#) that mayors from the Midwest being hard hit by fossil plant closures unveiled last week a "[Marshall Plan for Middle America](#)," a \$60 billion blueprint to help the region [transition away](#) from fossil fuels. Mayors from Pennsylvania, Kentucky, West

Virginia and Ohio are participating.

[The LA Times reported](#) that while the war on coal is over, the war on natural gas is beginning.

[E&E News reported](#) that an Indiana state policy task force is trying to preserve a role for coal-based power. “Indiana's transition from coal to cleaner energy sources is moving swiftly and should be carefully managed to ensure grid reliability and competitive electric rates, according to a state policy task force.”

*S&P Global* reported coal train loadings [have been increasing](#) in recent weeks.

*Argus* reported U.S. low-volatile coking coal [hit a record premium](#) to Australian premium hard coking coal.

A *CBS News* affiliate [reported on coal exports](#) from the Port of Richmond on San Francisco Bay.

[S&P Global reported](#) that 3rd quarter MSHA data show U.S. coal jobs down 24 percent since the start of the Trump administration in the first quarter of 2017, but up slightly compared to the 2nd quarter of this year.

[Ars Technica reported](#) on a [Massachusetts Institute of Technology paper](#) indicating that the high cost of building nuclear plants was due more to inefficient construction driving up costs rather than safety regulations.



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