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

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## **This Week in The News**

The first week of the Biden administration was marked by an unprecedented wave of executive actions and Democrats officially assuming control of the U.S. Senate. Executive branch personnel appointments continue to move forward at a steady pace, foreshadowing a quick start to action on a wide range of initiatives. The National Mining Association (NMA) remains engaged in the rapidly evolving policy landscape to advance mining's interests at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Plus we have updates on how mining and energy markets are faring.



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## Safety Share

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a [communication toolkit](#) for employers to use in educating essential employees about the benefits of being vaccinated against COVID-19 along with an [interim list](#) of industries and the phased rollout in which each sector will be eligible for its employees to receive vaccinations. The list provides guidance to local, state and territorial governments in organizing and distributing vaccine allocations. Because miners are in the energy sector or part of critical infrastructure, they are included in Phase 1c. Some, but not all, mining states are allowing mine rescue team members to be vaccinated as part of the Phase 1b rollout because they are first responders.

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## Congress Gets Started

Congressional Committees in the House and Senate have begun [announcing new committee assignments](#) and more will be coming over the next week. The Senate has reached an organization agreement mirroring the [last time the Senate was split 50-50](#)

[following the 2000 elections](#) with an even number of Republican and Democratic members on each committee, but with a Democratic member chairing each Senate committee with the unique Democratic 51-50 majority for this Congress.

The initial focus is on the new administration's COVID-19 relief legislation. Given its original cool reception in the Senate, House Democratic leadership is [making alternate plans](#) to consider COVID legislation through the budget reconciliation process, the value of which is to pass both chambers of Congress with a simple majority vote. Since Congress did not pass a budget resolution last year, Democratic congressional leadership believe they have two bites at reconciliation bills this Congress: one affecting FY21 and one for FY22. A reconciliation bill subject to a conferenced budget resolution is a one shot procedure each year usually reserved to enact only the highest of priorities in Congress or the administration.

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## Energy Secretary Nominee Jennifer Granholm Testifies at Confirmation Hearing



The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee today held a [confirmation hearing](#) for former Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm (D) to serve as energy secretary. Gov.

Granholm spoke about her priorities to ensure U.S. national security, manage the country's nuclear legacy, support scientific work at national labs, and deploy that research to create jobs. If confirmed as secretary, Gov. Granholm would be tasked with helping to implement the president's goal of expanding clean energy as part of an effort to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

The NMA prepared several questions related to access to critical minerals, creation of a national uranium reserve, and advance coal technologies. Gov. Granholm responded to questions from outgoing ENR Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) regarding mineral security agreeing that we need a strong critical minerals supply chain and can mine responsibly in the U.S. to advance a clean energy economy. She also acknowledged the need to access federal lands for critical mineral production and fielded several questions from Ranking Member John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) and Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) about the establishment of a uranium reserve at the DOE.

At several points during the hearing, Gov. Granholm stressed her support for carbon capture and storage technology stating that CCS is essential to reach net-zero emission by 2050. Gov. Granholm also responded to questions about the future of oil, gas and coal production in the U.S., transitioning energy technologies and the impact of that change on jobs across the country.

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## **White House Launches Governmentwide Climate Action**

The White House today launched a wide-ranging set of activities as part of its commitment to make combatting climate change a top priority. Despite initial rumors that coal mining would be included in a federal leasing moratorium, today's moratorium was specific to oil and gas.

Other actions that impact the mining industry include:

- Commitment to conserve at least 30 percent of our lands and oceans by 2030 and launches a process for stakeholder engagement from agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, Tribes, States, Territories, local officials, and others to identify strategies that will result in broad participation.
- The establishment of an Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, to be co-chaired by the National Climate Advisor and the Director of the National Economic Council, and directs federal agencies to coordinate investments and other efforts to assist coal, oil and natural gas, and power plant communities.
- A directive for the Working Group to advance projects that reduce emissions of toxic substances and greenhouse gases from existing and abandoned infrastructure and that prevent environmental damage that harms communities and poses a risk to public health and safety – such as projects to reduce methane emissions, oil and brine leaks, and other environmental harms from tens of thousands of former mining and well sites.

Access the Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad [here](#).

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## NMA and Third-Party Voices

NMA's Rich Nolan is quoted prominently in an [E&E Greenwire](#) story on Rep. Deb Haaland's promise to make climate change and tribal consultation centerpieces of Interior Department policy, noting that 'building back better' is a partnership opportunity with U.S. mining.

The [Harrisburg Patriot News](#) (PA), [Cherokee Tribune and Ledger News](#) (GA), [Erie Times News](#) (PA), [Logan Daily News](#) (OH), [Fort Myers News Press](#) (FL), [St. Joseph News Press Now](#) (MO), [Martins Ferry Times Leader](#) (OH), [Johnstown Tribune Democrat](#) (PA), [Miami Valley Today](#) (OH), [Deming Headlight](#) (NM), [Elko Daily Free](#)

[Press](#) (NV), [Salem News](#) (OH), [Lisbon Morning Journal](#) (OH), [East Liverpool Review](#) (OH), [Bakersfield Californian](#) (CA), [Bucks County Courier Times](#) (PA), [Franklin Favorite](#) (KY), and [The Bryan Times](#) (OH) all ran an op-ed by Matthew Kandrach, president of Consumer Action for a Strong Economy, in which he argues that a priority must be placed on providing affordable energy, not in transitioning away from a balanced grid.

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## Mining and Energy News

Climate Change Dispatch published: “Biden’s Green New Deal [won’t work without mining](#), especially for minerals.”

Politico published: “Biden’s narrow path to an [infrastructure dream](#).”

[S&P Global reported](#) that “In the early days of the new Biden administration, U.S. mine workers may get the additional COVID-19 protections they have sought since March 2020.”

[Utility Dive reported](#) on Wood Mackenzie [analysis](#) projecting that based on current developing technology, solar costs will fall another 15-25% over the next decade, potentially making solar the lowest-cost power resource in all U.S. states by 2030.

[The International Copper Study Group’s \(ICSG\)](#) January release of preliminary October data indicates that world copper mine production fell by around 0.5% in the first ten months of 2020, with concentrate production remaining essentially unchanged and solvent extraction-electrowinning (SX-EW) declining by about 2%. ICSG noted that “COVID-19 related constraints and other operational issues resulted in declines in production in other major copper mine producing countries, most notably Australia, Mexico and the United States.”

[Mining Journal](#) reported that “A perfect storm of strong demand and constrained supply is driving the price of iron ore towards an all-time high of more than US\$200 a tonne.”

[Argus Media](#) reported on Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data indicating that coal mining lost 7,000 jobs in 2020 (data exclude contract workers at the mines).

[Reuters reported](#) on a Sierra Club [analysis](#) indicating that most U.S. utilities plan to keep around 75% of their coal-fired power plants running for another decade.

An XCoal executive outlined opportunities for U.S. coal [exports to China](#).

[Argus Media](#) reported that “Day-ahead margins for coal burn turned negative across much of the U.S. Midwest yesterday as power prices fell amid expectations for above average temperatures.”



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