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

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## **This Week in The News**

The Biden administration policy landscape continues to take shape as more executive orders are issued and new agency and department heads begin the work of prioritizing regulatory actions. On Capitol Hill, the size and shape of another round of COVID-19 response is moving toward center stage with votes on initial budget resolutions in both chambers expected this week. The National Mining Association (NMA) remains focused on actively engaging 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 U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published new [guidelines for COVID-19 worker safety](#), including a list of 15 potential instructions on how to evaluate workplaces for hazards, isolate workers, and clean and disinfect workplaces.

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## Working Towards COVID-19 Legislation

This week, House of Representatives Democratic leadership released the [text](#) and [section by section](#) of its Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2021 and is expected to pass the resolution today. This budget resolution is specifically crafted to permit consideration of President Biden's proposed \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief legislation through budget reconciliation procedures. The resolution includes top-line budget numbers and gives House committees until February 16, 2021, to submit detailed legislation to comply with the resolution. Senate Democratic leadership also released the [text](#) of its Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2021 giving Senate committees until February 16, 2021, to submit legislation to comply as well. Senate consideration of its budget resolution will probably go well into Thursday evening.

However, Monday night 10 Republican senators [requested and met with President Biden](#) concerning their \$618 billion proposal for COVID-19 relief. An outline of the senators' proposal may be found [here](#). This is the second meeting in two weeks of bipartisan groups of senators trying to reach agreement to avoid partisan legislation. The introduction and consideration of the House budget resolution is the very first step among many to ultimately enact anything in Congress through a reconciliation bill requiring only 50 Senate votes to pass.

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## Lawmakers Reintroduce COVID-19 Miner Safety Bill

A bipartisan group of lawmakers reintroduced a bill on Monday to require the Department of Labor (DOL) to issue an emergency health standard to protect mineworkers from occupational COVID-19 exposure. The "[COVID-19 Mine Worker Protection Act](#)" would require the DOL to issue an emergency temporary standard (ETS) within seven days after enactment to protect miners against COVID-19, and to promulgate a final standard within 24 months after enactment to protect miners against "*infectious pathogens.*"

Senator Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) first introduced the bill last spring following calls from labor unions for more protections for miners. Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Mark Warner (D-Va.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Bob Casey (D-Pa.) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) have signed on to co-sponsor the Senate version. Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.) introduced the companion legislation in the House.

If passed, the bill would require operators to provide miners with necessary personal protective equipment, ancillary medical supplies, and other applicable supplies necessary to reduce and limit miners' exposure to COVID-19 in coal or other mines. The bill would require the ETS to include the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and OSHA guidelines to prevent transmission of infectious agents, and provisions for recording and reporting all work-related COVID-19 infections and deaths under Part 50 standards. The bill contains anti-discrimination and retaliation policies as well. Finally, it requires the Secretary of Labor to work with CDC and NIOSH to survey, track and investigate COVID-19 among miners.

In an [executive order](#) covering a range of workplace safety issues, President Biden last month directed the Mine Safety and Health Administration to "consider whether any emergency temporary standards on COVID-19 applicable to coal and metal or non-metal mines are necessary."

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## Nomination Hearings



The Senate continues to hold nomination hearings for key Cabinet secretaries important to the mining industry. On Tuesday, the Senate Agriculture Committee held a [nomination hearing](#) for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary-designate (and former Obama administration USDA Secretary) Tom Vilsack. The Agriculture Committee also voted to report the nomination for full Senate consideration the same day. This afternoon, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a nomination hearing for Environmental Protection Agency Administrator-designate Michael Regan. Tomorrow, the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee will hold a nomination hearing for DOL Secretary-designate Marty Walsh. We will keep you up to date on issues from these hearings important to mining.

Last week, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee [held a hearing for Department of Energy Secretary-designate Jennifer Granholm](#). During the course of the hearing, former Governor Granholm commented that the NMA-supported bipartisan energy legislation enacted in year-end legislation last year provides “direction to the Department of Energy to work on this issue of critical minerals and rare earths which I am very enthusiastically supportive of for both jobs and energy security and supply chain security in the United States.” She went a step further stating that “we know we can mine in a responsible way.” Governor Granholm responded to questions concerning working with Congress to establish a uranium reserve and at several points during the hearing she stressed her support for carbon capture and storage technology stating that CCS is essential. For a full description of the hearing, see the NMA’s post hearing memo

[here](#). The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted to report the Granholm nomination for full Senate consideration this morning.

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## **New USGS Commodities Survey for 2021**

This week, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) released its updated [Mineral Commodity Summaries](#). The annual report includes information on events, trends and issues for each of the more than 90 mineral commodities as well as discussions on domestic industry structure, government programs, tariffs, five-year salient statistics, and world production and resources.

U.S. import reliance remains high with the U.S. currently 100 percent import reliant for 17 mineral commodities, and 50 percent or more import reliant for another 29. In 2020, the estimated total value of nonfuel mineral production in the U.S. was \$82.3 billion, down 2 percent from the revised 2019 total of \$83.7 billion. The estimated value of metals production increased by three percent, from \$26.9 billion to \$27.7 billion and the overall value added of mineral production and processed materials is \$3.03 trillion, nearly 15 percent of U.S. gross domestic product. These annual reports are regularly used by pro-mining members of Congress and assists the NMA on Capitol Hill outreach concerning domestic production.

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## **Senate Evaluates Climate Change Progress**

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee today held the first climate hearing of the new Congress. The purpose of the hearing was to draw on data and analysis from leading authorities on global climate trends from energy related sectors to consider where and how progress has been made in addressing climate change.

The panel heard testimony from Dr. Fatih Birol, Executive Director International Energy Agency (IEA), that to achieve global net zero emissions in the ambitious time period will

require dramatic and accelerated innovation efforts across all sectors and across a wide range of technologies, including carbon capture utilization and storage. Dr. Birol said, “the United States is extremely well placed to lead the world along with other countries in the development and deployment of energy technologies that can help ensure a secure, affordable and sustainable supply of energy for decades to come.”

Dr. Birol continued that the rapid deployment of clean energy technologies also brings important new resource and security issues into focus, especially the reliable supplies of critical minerals and metals that are vital to energy transitions. Mark Mills, Senior Fellow at The Manhattan Institute, also testified on the importance of mining in energy transitions stating it is an “an opportunity for the United States to revitalize our domestic mining and mineral processing industries.” Dr. Birol announced that the IEA will release an analysis in April 2021 to examine how demand for critical minerals will evolve in response these policies and explain the implications for security of supply as well as responsible and sustainable developments of the resources.

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## NMA and Third-Party Voices

Rich Nolan was a featured speaker at the U.S. Energy Association’s 17th Annual [State of the Energy Industry Forum](#).

[The Lima News](#) (OH) has an op-ed from Dr. Robert Chase in which he writes that President Biden’s new executive order to move the federal vehicle fleet to made-in-America EVs could prove a woefully incomplete step if made in America EVs are not also made from materials that are mined in America.

The [Arizona Capitol Times](#) (AZ) and [St. Cloud Times](#) (MN) 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.

The NMA’s support is mentioned in a [Fox Business](#) report on Rep. Liz Cheney’s

legislation blocking President Biden's executive order to ban oil and gas leasing on federal lands and a potential coal moratorium.

## Mining and Energy News

Phil Baker, Hecla President and CEO, [appeared on CNBC](#) to discuss the recent rise in silver investment and why silver is a key metal for our future.



[S&P Global reported](#) that mining is poised to grow under the new administration with mined materials being key to his “Build Back Better” plan.

[According to the World Gold Council](#), 2020 global gold supply (production plus recycled metal) was 4,633 tons – 4% lower than the same period in 2019 and the largest annual fall since 2013 due to COVID-19 related mine disruptions. Global gold demand was down 14% in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the lowest level since 2008.

[E&E News reported](#) that “the coal mining industry is poised for a temporary reprieve in 2021.”

[The Energy Information Administration's \(EIA\) Today in Energy release](#) on carbon

emissions projections shows that coal accounted for 19% of total U.S. energy-related CO2 emissions in 2020. EIA expects this share of total emissions to rise to 21% in 2021 and 2022, as coal becomes more economical for use in electricity generation amid higher natural gas prices.

Morgan Stanley predicted coal will be absent from the U.S. power grid [by 2033](#).

[The World Steel Association reported](#) that global crude steel production reached 1,864 million tons (Mt) for the year 2020, down by 0.9% compared to 2019. The United States produced 72.7 Mt in 2020, down 17.2% from 2019.

[E&E News reports](#) that despite the surge in demand for solar power, the solar industry has difficulty finding workers interested in doing the required installation jobs.



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