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MINE Update

MINING INDUSTRY NEWS E-COMM UPDATE

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This Week in The News



Regulatory actions continued apace as the summer draws closer to an end and the GOP presidential primary debates begin. 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 the mining and energy markets are faring.

Safety Share

The National Association of Safety Professionals identified the [top six workplace hazards](#).

EPA Punts Ozone NAAQS Reconsideration to Late 2024



In a surprise but welcomed move, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Michael Regan publicly punted the agency's reconsideration of the ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to a new statutory

review. EPA has been under intense pressure from its independent Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) to lower the ozone NAAQS. The CASAC majority called for a much tougher primary limit in the range of 55 parts per billion (ppb) to 60 ppb. Throughout its reconsideration process, EPA has defended its decision to retain the current 70 ppb standards as detailed in its draft [Policy Assessments](#). EPA planned to issue a proposed rule in April 2024.

In a [letter](#) to Elizabeth Sheppard, the chair of CASAC, dated Aug. 18, 2023, Administrator Regan notified CASAC of his decision “that the best path forward is to initiate a new statutory review of the ozone NAAQS and the underlying air quality criteria and to wrap the EPA’s reconsideration process of the 2020 ozone NAAQS decision into that review.” Administrator Regan based this decision on CASAC’s “significant comments on the draft policy assessment and its advice on the importance of new studies not evaluated in the 2020 Integrated Science Assessment,” which “identified several issues arising in the reconsideration that warrant additional evaluation and review.” Administrator Regan emphasized: “This approach would facilitate additional work to address CASAC’s advice, as well as consideration of newer studies and updated analyses, in the context of a full and systematic review of the air quality criteria and standards.”

EPA released a [public statement](#) yesterday about its decision to initiate a new review of the ozone NAAQS and provided a timeline for next steps. EPA will soon issue a call for information in the Federal Register to kick off the statutory review process. In Spring 2024, EPA will convene a public science and policy workshop. In Fall 2024, the agency plans to release its Integrated Review Plan (Volume 2) to guide CASAC consideration and development of a new Integrated Science Assessment. Given this timeline, it is highly unlikely EPA will meet its statutory review obligation that ends in 2025 (five years after the Trump Administration’s 2020 decision to retain the standard).

The NMA has defended EPA's prior decisions to retain the existing ozone NAAQS. Administrator Regan's decision ensures in the near-term that the ozone NAAQS remains unchanged and removes the threat of increased permitting challenges for the mining industry and the industries it supports.

NMA Submits Comments on DOI Proposed Changes to Three Endangered Species Act Reforms

This week, the NMA submitted comments on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service [proposed](#) revisions to three rules related to the implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that were finalized in 2019 under the previous administration. The comments for section 7 are available [here](#); the comments for section 4 are available [here](#); and the comments for section 4(d) are available [here](#). The NMA's comments stress the need for regulatory certainty regarding ESA listed species as well as the need for efficient consultation under section 7. The comments also express concern that the proposed changes to the section 4 regulations will undermine the intent of Congress in enacting the ESA, conflict with the U.S. Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Weyerhaeuser v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*, and unnecessarily complicate the ESA. Further, the NMA's comments urge against reinstating the blanket section 4(d) rule because it would jeopardize meaningful conservation for individual species and their habitats.

New DOE Funding Increases Domestic Mineral Supply Chain Cooperation and Action



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Fossil Energy and
Carbon Management

This week, the Department of Energy (DOE) announced several new and continuing funding streams to encourage the growth of the domestic mineral supply chain. A new funding opportunity [announcement](#) (FOA) makes available \$30 million for industry, academia and state governments to develop innovative methods to extract and separate rare earth elements from coal and coal-byproducts. This is the second FOA in recent weeks intended to scale and commercialize the coal to rare earths supply chain, which has received increased interest within DOE's Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management and from Congress. Details of the two FOA's and how to apply for each can be found in a NMA memo [here](#).

Also this week, DOE [announced](#) it would receive potential additional funding of \$30 million annually for its Critical Materials Institute (CMI). The purpose of the institute is to foster collaboration and leverage crosscutting activities between mining schools, industry partners, and the national labs to develop the domestic mineral supply chain. The NMA and several of our member companies have already been actively engaged with the CMI on workforce initiatives and activities to increase efficient extraction at mining operations. If you are interested in working with CMI you can read more [here](#) or [email](#) the NMA to learn more.

The West Comes Together in Idaho

Today through Friday nearly a dozen western mining associations, including the NMA, are meeting in Donnelly, Idaho, to discuss shared challenges and solutions to today's mining challenges. The group will also travel to Valley County to tour the Stibnite Mining District, one of the most historic mining districts in the U.S. Some of the topics the group will discuss include permitting reform, workforce development, Good Samaritan legislation as well as market environments.

STB Announces RETAC Vacancy for At-Large Representative

Last week, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) [announced](#) six vacancies on its Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee (RETAC). Of interest to NMA members is the vacancy of an at-large representative seat, available for anyone with relevant experience pertaining to rail and shipping of energy resources. The STB is soliciting nominations from the public to fill the vacancies by Sept. 15, 2023. The STB established the RETAC to serve as a forum for discussion of emerging issues regarding the transportation by rail of energy resources. The RETAC [charter](#) states that membership shall consist of approximately 28 voting members, with three representatives from coal producers, and up to two at large members with relevant experience. All vacancies are for three-year terms, ending Sept. 30, 2026.

OMB Publishes Draft Guidance on Environmental and Ecosystem Services in Cost-Benefit Analysis; Mining & Energy Examples Highlighted

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recently [published](#) for public comment the first-ever [proposed guidance](#) to federal agencies on accounting for “ecosystem services” in benefit-cost analyses for regulatory actions. **Comments are due Sept. 18, 2023.** If finalized as proposed, the draft guidance would change the way federal agencies value and consider changes in environmental benefits, or “ecosystem services,” and their corresponding human welfare impacts in benefit-cost analyses for regulatory actions. As described in more detail [here](#), the guidance uses a broad range of potential rulemaking topics and industry sectors, including mining and energy production, as examples to illustrate how federal agencies should apply these concepts. While the draft guidance is only guidance for agencies to consider during benefit-cost analysis, we are concerned that rules impacting the mining industry could be unfairly characterized as having only negative effects on ecosystem services and human welfare. The NMA continues to review the draft guidance and welcomes your feedback.

**NMA Board of Directors Meeting Room
Block Deadline: Aug. 28**



The NMA Fall Board of Directors and Annual Members Meeting will be held Sept. 20-22, 2023, at the Conrad Washington, D.C. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back to D.C.

HOTEL INFORMATION – CUT-OFF EXTENDED

Hotel rooms in the NMA block are on a first come, first served basis. The group rate (\$499/night) will be available until August 28, 2023, or until the block is full. [Click here to reserve a room at the Conrad Washington, D.C.](#) There is a city-wide event taking place the same week as the board meeting, and rooms will sell out. Please make your travel arrangements as soon as possible.

REGISTRATION

To register for the Board Meeting and the Member Reception, [please click here](#).

AGENDA

The meeting will begin Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023, with the Manufacturers & Services Board of Governors Meeting. It will continue Thursday, September 21, 2023, with a great speaker line up, available [here](#). We will end the day Thursday with the NMA Member and Congressional Reception. Friday, Sept. 22,

2023 will be the NMA Board of Director Meeting.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsorships are very popular and are available on a first come, first served basis. There are several events at this meeting that provide member companies with sponsorship opportunities. This includes two breakfasts, lunch, breaks and the Member Reception. If you would like to sponsor an event, please [complete the form](#) and return to Katie Coon at kcoon@nma.org.

Should you have any questions regarding the meeting, please contact Katie Coon at 202-463-2632.

NMA and Third Parties In the News

The [Las Vegas Sun](#) (Nev.) ran a feature op-ed by Rich Nolan in which he highlights Nevada's position as a pivotal provider of the materials required for a green energy future.

From our third parties, the [Pottstown Mercury](#) (Pa.) [Beckley Register Herald](#) (W.Va.) and [Yahoo News](#) (USA) all ran an op-ed by Matthew Kandrach, president of Consumer Action for a Strong Economy, a free-market advocacy organization, in which he argues the obvious alternative to EPA's extraordinarily dangerous plan is to focus on building and deploying new energy technologies and infrastructure before tearing down the power plants that currently underpin our system.

The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) carries an op-ed by Robert Chase in which he argues Congress should take steps to re-shore mining and processing of minerals and metals.

Mining and Energy News

[World Steel Association](#) data for July shows world crude steel production at 158.5 million metric ton (Mt), a 6.6 percent increase compared to July 2022.

[Argus](#) reported that Appalachian coal production increased in the second quarter of 2023 to meet higher demand from export markets as domestic generation demand fell.

[Washington Post](#) and others reported that the Inflation Reduction Act will spur significantly higher demand for minerals - key ingredients in clean-energy technologies. Ensuring there's adequate supply will present "considerable" challenges according to recent S&P Global analysis.

EIA's [Energy Today](#) reported that U.S. uranium production was up in 2022 after hitting a record low in 2021. Uranium concentrate (U_3O_8) production was nearly 10 times higher than the previous year, with 95 percent of the uranium purchased by U.S. nuclear power plant operators originating in other countries.

[Argus](#) reported that coal exports out of Westshore Terminals fell slightly in the second quarter compared with the same period the year before.

[The Hill](#) reported that former Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette who championed clean coal will lead the Edison Electric Institute (EEI).

[Houston Chronicle](#) reported on recent S&P analysis showing the U.S. will require 700,000 metric tons of nickel a year by the mid-2030s if the country is to stay on track with its clean energy goals.

[Wall Street Journal](#) reported that western companies are investing in

facilities to process battery metals in countries such as Tanzania, Mauritius and South Africa.

[Reuters](#) reported that ERCOT has deployed an emergency response as reserves drop on the Texas grid.

[The Wall Street Journal](#) carried an op-ed arguing how the EPA isn't even trying to hide its lawlessness with its "suite" of climate policies.

[Mining.com](#) reported that ArcelorMittal SA, the world's second-largest steelmaker, is considering a potential offer for U.S. Steel Corp.

[Freight Waves](#) reported that despite growth in renewable energy demand, there is more coal being shipped by sea than ever before and coal is seeing an all time high in production, consumption and seaborne trade, according to International Energy Agency analysis.

[EnergyWire](#) reported that to keep the Four Corners coal plant on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico producing electricity, Enchant Energy is proposing a retrofit that could capture and store 95 percent of the facility's greenhouse gas emissions.

[Mining.com](#) reported on researchers at the University of Basel who have developed chromium compounds that can replace the noble metals osmium and ruthenium—two elements that are almost as rare as gold or platinum—in luminescent materials and catalysts.

[Reuters](#) reported that "Receding fears of a U.S. slowdown, surging bond yields and the robust performance of equities have gradually eroded the appeal of exchange-traded funds (ETF) backed by traditional safe-haven gold this year, despite sticky inflation."

The [International Copper Study Group's](#) recent monthly data for June indicated that world copper mine production increased by approximately 2 percent in the first half of 2023, with concentrate production increasing by about 2.2 percent and solvent extraction-electrowinning (SX-EW) by 1.5 percent.

Commodity Prices

Commodity Price - Snapshot		
Metals Prices	Date	Price
Cobalt Spot Price (\$/lb)	8/22/23	\$15.15
Copper Spot Price (\$/lb)	8/23/23	\$3.80
Gold Spot Price (\$/ounce)	8/23/23	\$1,918.10
Lead Spot Price (\$/lb)	8/22/23	\$0.98
Lithium Spot Price (\$/kg)	8/23/23	\$29.83
Molybdenum Spot Price (\$/kg)	8/22/23	\$58.75
Nickel Spot Price (\$/lb)	8/22/23	\$9.19
Silver Spot Price (\$/ounce)	8/23/23	\$24.34
Steel HRC Price (\$/mt)	8/23/23	\$719.28
Steel Rebar Price (\$/mt)	8/23/23	\$512.16
Zinc Spot Price (\$/lb)	8/23/23	\$1.07
Energy Prices	Date	Price
Coal Price - Australian Premium Coking Coal Futures (\$/mt)	8/22/23	\$256.00
Coal Spot Price - Central Appalachian (\$/st)	8/18/23	\$70.00
Coal Spot Price - Newcastle futures (\$/mt)	8/22/23	\$149.88
Coal Spot Price - Rotterdam futures (\$/mt)	8/22/23	\$118.80
Natural Gas Spot Price - Henry Hub (\$/mmbtu)	8/16/23	\$2.55
Uranium Spot Price (\$/lb)	8/21/23	\$58.25
Sources: publicly available data from eia.gov , dailymetalprice.com , tradingeconomics.com , sgxgroup.com , investing.com		

CORESafety



In the August edition of CORESafety TV we review Module number 15, Behavior Optimization.



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