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# MINE Update

MINING INDUSTRY NEWS E-COMM UPDATE

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## This Week in The News

With the One Big Beautiful Bill and recissions in the rear-view mirror (for now, anyway) Congress headed into the home stretch before its planned summer recess. The House is scheduled to depart Thursday until September 2. The Senate is scheduled to begin its August recess on July 31, although President Trump called upon senators to stick around and work on confirmations. Meanwhile, deregulatory actions and federal workforce reductions continue apace. 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.

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## Safety Share

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has produced a handy "[Healthy Home Checklist](#)" that gives room by room instructions on what to look for to improve safety.

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### House Natural Resources Committee Holds NEPA Oversight Hearing



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

Today, the House Natural Resources Committee held a full committee oversight hearing titled, "Permitting Purgatory: Restoring Common Sense to NEPA Reviews." Please find a link to the hearing [here](#). The hearing will be used to reinstate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reform discussions that began in the last congress by committee Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.), with his [discussion draft](#) legislation. Ahead of the hearing, the NMA was asked by the committee to submit a letter of support for reforming the NEPA process. Please find a link to the letter submitted by the NMA [here](#). Witnesses for the majority included Tony Boals (Vice President of Wright Brothers Construction Company), Tony Campbell (CEO of East Kentucky Power Cooperative), and Alex Herrgott (President and CEO of The Permitting Institute). Testifying for the minority was Andrew Mergen (Faculty Director of the Emmett Environmental Law and Policy Clinic at Harvard Law School). The

NMA will continue to work with committee staff and other stakeholders to support the committee's continued efforts to enact needed reforms to NEPA.

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## Department of Agriculture Publishes NEPA Interim Final Rule



On July 3, 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published an **interim final rule** (IFR) that makes major changes to the department's approach to implementation of its NEPA regulations. USDA's changes have implications for mining projects on national forest lands as the department's action includes rescission of the U.S. Forest Service's NEPA regulations.

While titled an "interim final rule," USDA is accepting comment until Aug. 4, 2025. The rule is effective immediately, but USDA agencies will have the discretion to determine which NEPA procedures to apply to individual proposals. Agencies may continue to use the versions of USDA-specific NEPA regulations in place before the IFR publication, as well as the 2020 version, for projects "that are at a certain stage in the NEPA process." Alternatively, USDA states that these new procedures can be used right away for new proposals or proposals in early stages.

These updates are primarily motivated by three factors: (1) the congressionally imposed NEPA requirements under the 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act, including firm timelines; (2) the administration's recent revocation of government-wide

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations; and (3) the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decisive NEPA ruling. In the IFR, USDA is modifying its NEPA implementing regulations by repealing and replacing USDA's existing NEPA regulations. The IFR modifies the departmental NEPA regulations by consolidating USDA's current overarching regulations with additional sections from agency-specific regulations, including the Forest Service. The IFR is intended to update USDA's NEPA regulations to be a "more faithful implementation of the statute as amended in 2023 than its old procedures," while allowing USDA to meet the administration objectives of efficiency and flexibility. A detailed summary of USDA's interim final rule is available [here](#).

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## **NMA Comments on DOI's Request for Information on Reducing Regulatory Burdens**

The NMA this week submitted [comments](#) in response to the Department of the Interior's (DOI) [request](#) for information (RFI) to identify existing regulations that can be modified or repealed to ensure that DOI administrative actions do not undermine the national interest and that DOI achieves a meaningful reduction in regulatory burdens. The RFI is part of the DOI's implementation of recent directives from the President's Executive Order (EO) 14154, "[Unleashing American Energy](#)," and EO 14192, "[Unleashing Prosperity through Deregulation](#)," that prioritized alleviating unnecessary regulatory burdens placed on the energy industry and the American people.

The NMA's submission built from our recent [submission](#) to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) RFI on deregulatory actions as a baseline. We supplemented the OMB submission with additional DOI entries related to: (1) the streamlining of Federal Register reviews for National Environmental Policy Act documents; (2) reducing scope creep of other environmental

statutes; (3) reviewing practices for the designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern; (4) reviewing the application of the patented non-mineral (surface) estate regulations to the Stock-Raising Homestead Act privatized surface; (5) and revising the regulations implementing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

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## **NMA Joins Coalition Letter on CWA Nationwide Permits**

The NMA joined 10 industry associations in filing a comment letter supporting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) proposal to reissue and modify nationwide permits (NWP) under the Clean Water Act that are scheduled to expire on March 14, 2026. We strongly supported the reauthorization of the NWP program. However, we also recommended that the Corps consider additional measures, like conducting another rulemaking, to improve it further and ensure alignment with the administration's objectives. While numerous enhancements could improve the NWP program, we identify some specific recommendations from recent initiatives for the Corps to evaluate and consider including increasing acreage and mitigation thresholds and accelerating timelines.

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## **NMA Comments on Ten-Day Notice Recission**

Last week, the NMA filed [comments](#) in response to the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement's (OSMRE) [proposed rule](#) to rescind its

2024 Ten-Day Notice (TDN) regulations. The [proposed rescission](#) would streamline the process for coordination with state regulatory authorities and minimize duplicative efforts on the administration of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. The NMA's comments supported the rescission and reiterated many of our previous comments in the 2020 and 2023 rulemaking processes, including recommendations for further refinements to the TDN regulations.

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## Congress Advances FY26 Appropriations Process



With the current fiscal year ending September 30, both chambers of Congress are making progress on their Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) appropriations bills. The House has advanced 10 of its spending bills through subcommittee, completed full committee markups on seven and passed two on the House floor. The Senate has marked up four bills so far. While neither chamber adopted the full extent of spending cuts proposed by President Trump, the House has approved deeper reductions than the Senate, with most of its bills advancing along party-line votes.

In the House, the [Interior, Environment](#) Appropriations bill includes \$37.97 billion in discretionary funding, \$2.54 billion (6 percent) below the FY25 enacted level. Key funding levels include \$14.77 billion for the Department of the Interior, \$1.27 billion for the Bureau of Land Management, \$1.37 billion for the U.S. Geological Survey, \$168 million for the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, \$7.01 billion for the EPA (a \$2.12 billion reduction) and \$8.54 billion for the Forest Service. This bill also includes language from the [Mining Regulatory Clarity Act](#), which would reaffirm the right to conduct mining activities on public lands and create a new revenue stream to support the clean-up of abandoned mine lands.

It also includes several policy riders blocking implementation of controversial EPA regulations, including rules impacting air and water permitting, and power plant operations. These provisions reflect House Republicans' ongoing efforts to limit executive overreach and provide regulatory certainty for domestic energy and resource development.

The [House Energy and Water Development](#) Appropriations bill provides a total of \$57.3 billion, which is \$766.4 million below the FY25 enacted level. This includes \$687.5 million for Fossil Energy, which is \$177.5 million below FY25 but includes an increase for research and development on critical minerals to develop the full suite of production technologies, including separation and extraction, to secure the domestic supply chain and reduce reliance on foreign sources.

The House [Defense](#) Appropriations report also highlights concern over U.S. supply chain vulnerabilities, particularly regarding reliance on foreign sources for critical minerals.

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## **PERMIT Act and CRA Resolutions Delayed Amid Rules Committee Disruption**

Floor consideration of the NMA-supported PERMIT Act (H.R. 3898) and three Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolutions targeting Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resource management plans (RMPs) has been delayed following [unexpected disruptions](#) in the House Rules Committee. The PERMIT Act, introduced by Rep. Mike Collins (R-Ga.), was scheduled to advance in tandem with the CRAs this week but may now be postponed until September.

The Rules Committee had taken testimony in support of the PERMIT Act [yesterday](#), which would streamline Clean Water Act permitting by consolidating reforms that promote regulatory certainty, reduce duplicative reviews and reinforce the role of states in Section 401 water quality certification decisions. It was expected to move to the House floor alongside H.J. Res. 104 (Miles City RMP), H.J. Res. 105 (North Dakota RMP) and H.J. Res. 106 (Central Yukon RMP)—all of which seek to overturn restrictive land management plans finalized by BLM.

Controversy surrounding Democratic amendments to release sealed Jeffrey Epstein records led Rules Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) to postpone further action. The NMA supports the PERMIT Act and addressing the Biden-era RMPs and will continue to advocate for its position when House leadership resumes floor scheduling.

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## **NMA Supports EPA Approval of North Dakota CCR Permit Program**

Last week, the NMA filed [comments](#) supporting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) **proposed approval** of North Dakota's (ND) Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR) Permit Program. The NMA urged EPA to (1) approve ND's permit program because it meets the statutory criteria for approval and is "at least as protective as" the federal requirements; and (2) review state CCR permitting programs timely and efficiently, thereby creating regulatory certainty that supports state-led implementation efforts. The NMA also encouraged EPA to continue to prioritize coal ash actions. If EPA approves this ND's CCR permitting program, it will be just the fourth state in the country to manage its own CCR. When EPA released this preliminary approval, it was lauded by EPA Region 8 Administrator Cyrus Western, North Dakota Governor Kelly Armstrong and both U.S. Senators from North Dakota, John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer.

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## NMA Participates in Good Samaritan Symposium with EPA



Last week, the NMA's Justin Prosser joined Good Samaritan program leads from the EPA Office of Mountains, Deserts and Plains, representatives from the

Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service, state regulators from several western states, NMA members (including Coeur Mining, Freeport-McMoRan, Rio Tinto, Perpetua Resources and Integra Resources) as well as other industry stakeholders at the “Realizing Hardrock Good Samaritan Success” Symposium in Leadville, Colorado. The symposium, hosted by the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America and Trout Unlimited, included a presentation from the EPA on their efforts to implement the Good Samaritan law along with an anticipated timeline for when they will begin selecting the first phase of projects under the program. Additionally, representatives from Arizona, Colorado, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Wyoming and Utah presented potential project ideas for the program. The symposium ended with a mining industry panel (pictured) to discuss opportunities and challenges faced by the industry as engagement in, and with, the Good Samaritan program continues.

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## **Intrepid Potash Recognized at Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue Contest**



The 2025 Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue contest brought together dedicated mine rescue teams from across the region to test their skills, teamwork and technical expertise. Over several days, teams competed in various categories, demonstrating their preparedness for emergency situations

and their commitment to safety in the mining industry. NMA member company Intrepid Potash's Blue Team was recognized in multiple categories. Congratulations to all participants and those that secured top placements in their respective categories.

## NMA and Third Parties In the News

[E&E Daily](#) quotes Rich Nolan in a story on President Trump's pick to serve as the nation's top coal mining regulator.

[Pottstown Mercury](#) (Pa.) carries an op-ed by Rich Nolan in which he argues AI is already disrupting the job market but the modern mining industry, and its need for diverse skillsets, is hiring.

From our third parties, [Real Clear Energy](#) has an op-ed from Jim Constantopoulos in which he argued for the importance of the continued operation of New Mexico's last remaining coal plant.

[The Daily Courier](#) (Pa.), [Boston Herald](#) (Mass.), [Daily Jefferson County Union](#) (Wis.), [The Dubuque Telegraph Herald](#) (Iowa) and [The Las Vegas Sun](#) (Nev.) carry an op-ed by Terry Jarrett in which he argues with power demand now surging from electric vehicles and data centers — and with our grid operators and reliability regulators warning of mounting reliability concerns — we must not overlook the irreplaceable importance of coal and natural gas power plants.

## Mining and Energy News

[Mining.com](#) reported that silver rose 1.6 percent to nearly \$39 per ounce last week, the highest since September 2011, as investors flocked to safe-haven assets amid escalating U.S. trade tensions.

[Argus](#) reported that U.S. lawmakers from Montana have introduced a resolution aiming to overturn last year's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) restrictions on coal leasing in a part of the Powder River Basin (PRB).

[New York Times](#) reported that the Chinese government said that it would restrict any effort to transfer out of China eight key technologies for manufacturing electric vehicle batteries, a move that could cement the country's already dominant role in the production of electric cars.

[E&E News PM](#) reported that Canada is overhauling its steel trade policy to better protect its domestic industry from a flood of cheap imports, especially from China, while exempting the U.S. from the measures.

[The Coal Hub](#) reported on their estimation that global hard coal production grew to an estimated 8.5 billion metric tons in 2024. Including lignite, total coal production last year was over 9 billion tons.

[Argus](#) reported that four U.S. coal workers were killed in separate mining accidents during the first half the year, up from three fatalities during the same period a year earlier, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) data show.

[Mining.com](#) reported on a new poll by the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) showing that metals analysts are growing more bullish on gold for the remainder of this year, forecasting 15 percent higher prices on average.

[Argus](#) reported that President Trump's threatened 30 percent tariff on goods imported from the EU is unlikely to have more than a marginal effect on U.S.

thermal coal trade flows, since transatlantic shipments have already been slimmer in recent years.

[\*\*E&E News PM\*\*](#) reported that the Interior Department will convey nearly 28,000 acres in federal lands to an Alaska Native corporation that could help pave the way for the Ambler Road Project needed to access mining claims.

[\*\*Argus\*\*](#) reported that Georgia regulators have cleared a unit of U.S. utility Southern Company to delay the retirement of the Scherer and Bowen coal plants to meet projected load growth within its service territory.

[\*\*Politico Pro\*\*](#) reported that the Trump administration announced new tariffs on imports of a key battery material from China last week, ruling that Chinese firms are dumping graphite active anode material into the U.S. at less than fair value.

[\*\*Mining.com\*\*](#) reported that Energy Fuels has begun heavy rare earth element (HREE) production on a pilot scale at its White Mesa mill in Utah, paving the way for commercial production as early as 2026.

[\*\*Argus\*\*](#) reported that U.S. coal production in the first half of 2025 exceeded year-prior levels in every major coal basin, reflecting sustained domestic buyer-interest and generation plant retirements that are delayed beyond the summer.

[\*\*Bloomberg\*\*](#) reported on Trump, the U.S. and other nations' critical minerals obsession with deep-sea mining.

[\*\*Reuters\*\*](#) reported that China's exports of rare earth magnets to the U.S. in June soared to more than seven times their May level, marking a sharp recovery in the flow of critical minerals used in electric vehicles and wind turbines after a Chinese-U.S. trade deal.

**Washington Examiner** reported that the share price of Northern Dynasty Minerals has halved on the news that it is turning to the courts to try to force the Trump administration to sign off on the Pebble Mine in Alaska.

**Utility Dive** reported that rising electricity demand and a slowdown in the buildout of alternative sources of power generation could extend the use of coal globally and displace 2,100 GW of gas and renewables by 2050, according to recent Wood Mackenzie analysis.

## Commodity Prices

<b>Commodity Prices - Snapshot</b>				
<b>Metals Prices</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Price</b>
Cobalt Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/15/25	\$15.12	7/21/25	\$15.12
Copper Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/15/25	\$5.56	7/21/25	\$15.61
Gold Spot Price (\$/ounce)	7/15/25	\$3,359.50	7/21/25	\$3,362.60
Lead Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/15/25	\$0.90	7/21/25	\$0.91
Lithium Spot Price (\$/kg)	7/15/25	\$9.04	7/21/25	\$9.47
Molybdenum Spot Price (\$/kg)	7/15/25	\$68.29	7/21/25	\$66.21
Nickel Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/15/25	\$6.89	7/21/25	\$7.03
Silver Spot Price (\$/ounce)	7/15/25	\$38.26	7/21/25	\$38.47
Steel HRC Price (\$/mt)	7/15/25	\$880.81	7/21/25	\$872.73
Steel Rebar Price (\$/mt)	7/15/25	\$426.75	7/21/25	\$442.31
Zinc Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/15/25	\$1.22	7/21/25	\$1.29
<b>Energy Prices</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Price</b>
Coal Price - Austr. Prem. Coking Coal Futures (\$/mt)	7/15/25	\$177.50	7/21/25	\$190.00
Coal Spot Price - Central Appalachian (\$/st)	7/11/25	\$79.00	7/18/25	\$79.00
Coal Spot Price - Newcastle futures (\$/mt)	7/15/25	\$67.57	7/21/25	\$109.80
Coal Spot Price - Rotterdam futures (\$/mt)	7/14/25	\$104.50	7/21/25	\$104.75
Natural Gas Spot Price - Henry Hub (\$/mmbtu)	7/8/25	\$3.08	7/16/25	\$3.43
Uranium Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/15/25	\$72.30	7/21/25	\$71.25

Sources: publicly available data from eia.gov, dailymetalprice.com, tradingeconomics.com, sgxgroup.com, investing.com

# CORESafety



In the July edition of CORESafety TV, we discuss CORESafety's Module Number six, Occupational Health and Well-being.



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