



H.R. 520/ S. 145: THREATENING WATER RESOURCES, DISENFRANCHISING COMMUNITIES

Masquerading as a bill about “strategic and critical minerals,” HR 520/S 145 strips key water, health and community protections against the nation’s largest toxic polluter, the hardrock mining industry.

The 1872 Mining Law that governs hardrock mining on public lands – mainly metals like gold, copper, silver and uranium -- already allows industry open, privileged access to public minerals:

- Multinational corporations mine publicly-owned minerals without paying the taxpayers for them.
- The Law makes mining the "highest and best use" of public lands. Federal land managers do not deny mine proposals.
- In addition, loopholes in the Clean Water Act allow hardrock mines to dump their toxic waste in to our lakes.



The Father of the 1872 Mining Law, Nevada Senator William Stewart.

HR 520/ S145 would allow mines for common minerals like sand and gravel to truncate the mine permitting process and eliminate meaningful environmental review. The bill threatens water resources, and limits the ability of mining-impacted communities to protect their land, water and health.

Mining at Any Cost

HR 520/ S 145 allows federal agencies to exempt mining projects from NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) review. NEPA guarantees ordinary citizens can participate in the evaluation of projects that affect them, like a mining proposal. This bill forces a permit decision within 30 months regardless of whether the permittee seeks uranium from a sacred Native site or gold from underneath a Wilderness.

A Better Way

Disenfranchising rural communities and polluting western waters is not a solution. What we need is reform to the 1872 Mining Law, in addition to research, recycling, and alternative sustainable metal sources. HR 520/ S 145 takes us in the wrong direction. The hardrock mining industry should be clamoring to lead the world in better mining practices, not catering to the lowest common denominator.

