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RESOURCE COUNCILS**

**Don't Miss a Golden Opportunity to Reform the 1872 Mining Law!
Natural Resources Committee Markup
Tuesday, October 23, 9:00 AM**

Dear Representative,

Last Thursday, the House Committee on Natural Resources began its markup to reform one of the most archaic laws on the books. **The General Mining Law of 1872** governs the mining of gold, uranium and other hardrock minerals on western public lands and has gone virtually unchanged since it was signed by President Ulysses S. Grant.

The 1872 Law – enacted to encourage development of the West – still gives metal mining on many public lands special priority over recreation, ranching, hunting, fishing and conservation. It allows mining companies—even those that are foreign-owned—to take precious resources from public lands virtually for free, unlike the oil, gas and coal industries that have been paying royalties for decades.

Important amendments were passed on Thursday to strengthen **H.R. 2262, The Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2007**, to truly protect communities, taxpayers and the environment. An amendment by Congressman Hinchey assured that taxpayers receive some return from mines currently operating on public land, a key tenet of mining law reform. Congressman Inslee's amendment clarified language to ensure that mining claim holders are not granted additional rights that trump other valuable uses of public lands. We thank these members, as well as Chairmen Rahall and Costa, the sponsors of this legislation, for their leadership on these issues.

Tomorrow, the Committee is scheduled to finish the markup of H.R. 2262. If these amendments are adopted and weakening amendments rejected, the bill will provide the genuine reform needed to protect America's taxpayers and the public. However, mining reform will not be real reform if the mining industry succeeds in its attempt to undermine key provisions in H.R. 2262. We are asking you to support hardrock mining reform that is genuine and includes:

- **Protecting taxpayers by setting a royalty for all mining operations – current and future -- comparable to those paid by other extractive industries.**
- **Ending hardrock mining's special status on many public lands that gives it priority over conservation and recreation.**
- **Conserving valuable fish & wildlife habitat by placing national forest roadless areas and other special places "off limits" to new mining claims.**
- **Preserving water quality and preventing perpetual pollution.**
- **Allowing state, county and tribal governments to submit petitions to protect important lands from new mining claims.**

We expect a strengthening amendment to be offered by Congressman Holt (D-NJ) and Congressman Inslee (D-WA) that will offer additional protections to National Parks and National Monuments. We urge you to vote in favor of this amendment. Given the rush of new claims being staked on the edge of numerous Park and Monument boundaries, additional safeguards are needed to assure that large-scale mining operations do not adversely impact these important natural treasures.

There will also be a vote to allow tribal governments to request protection of sacred sites from mining. Congressman Grijalva offered an amendment to allow tribal governments to petition to put important cultural and religious lands off limits to mining. This amendment was accepted by voice vote, but a roll call vote will be held on Tuesday. We urge you to vote in favor of this important amendment.

We Urge You to Vote for Real Reform and Support H.R. 2262 with These Important Amendments.