



Our membership and services span the globe

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NWMA -- Current Issues and Projects (February 2009)

NWMA never rests on its past accomplishments. Here is a short list of the issues we are currently working to solve and/or improve for the benefit of the U.S. mining industry. If you are working in the mining industry, then you are benefiting from the work NWMA does.

- **Economic Recovery**

NWMA is working to educate the Administration, Members of Congress, the media and the public that mining is indispensable to economic recovery and energy independence; that historically mining has led the Nation out of recession and is poised to do it again; and that mining provides an economic stimulus package that doesn't require deficit spending or cost tax payers a dime.

- **Mining Law**

In addition to its work opposing H.R. 2262 (the Rahall bill) in 2007; NWMA is working closely with the National Mining Association (NMA) and other industry groups to oppose H.R. 699, *The Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2009*. H.R. 699 is identical to H.R. 2262. We are working with House minority subcommittee staff to produce a Mining Law alternative to H.R. 699 that would help ensure a viable domestic mining industry.

We are providing an on-the-ground voice for the junior mining company and exploration sectors of the U.S. mining industry to ensure that any revisions to the Mining Law do not overly burden exploration and development and that access to mineral deposits on public lands is protected. Our priorities include preventing unnecessary withdrawal of lands from mineral entry; retaining the right of self initiation and the current mining claim system; establishing an abandoned mine land fund to address historic abandoned mines; ensuring that one has the right to use and occupy a mining claim for purposes reasonably incident to mining from entry through closure; ensuring that any royalty or production payment is fair, both to the American public and the mining industry; and to ensure that claim location and maintenance fees remain reasonable and do not become an impediment to exploration.

- **Arizona Strip**

NWMA has retained Mountain States Legal Foundation and intervened on behalf of its members in *Center for Biological Diversity v Kempthorne*. This lawsuit seeks to compel the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw more than 1 million acres from mineral entry. The area contains more than 40% of known U.S. uranium deposits. NWMA opposes the withdrawal and seeks to have the Federal Land Policy and Management Act's (FLPMA) emergency withdrawal regulations declared unconstitutional.

- **H.R. 644 – *The Grand Canyon Watershed Protection Act*.**

NWMA is working to defeat this legislation which would permanently withdraw more than 1 million acres in the Arizona Strip from mineral entry adversely impacting more than 40% of known U.S. uranium reserves.

- **S.140 – *The Abandoned Mine Reclamation Act of 2009.***

- NWMA opposes this bill which would impose the royalty scheme from Chairman Rahall’s Mining Law bill (H.R.699) (4% gross on existing production; 8% gross on new mines) along with a .0003 reclamation fee on all hardrock mine production from federal, private and state lands to fund an AML reclamation fund.

- **S.22 Omnibus Lands Bill**

NWMA has worked with our allies to actively oppose the Omnibus Lands bill that would eliminate or restrict access to or multiple-use of public lands. Three main areas of concern for NWMA in the omnibus package are the National landscape Conservation System Act, the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act and the designation of National Heritage Areas and National Scenic Trails.

- **National Forest Wilderness Review as Part of the Forest Plan Revision Process**

As part of the Forest Plan Revision Process, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (HTNF) in Nevada is conducting a wilderness review of all acreage within the HTNF. NWMA is leading the effort to ensure that lands with mineral potential are not included in any recommendation for wilderness designation.

Abandoned Mine Lands

NWMA recently testified in support of Good Samaritan Legislation that would provide Clean Water Act, Superfund and RCRA liability relief to our members who voluntarily work to clean up abandoned mines. NWMA is working with other industry groups to obtain Senate and House approval of the modified Salazar/Allard Good Samaritan legislation.

- **The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

NWMA is working with other industry groups, governors and some Members of Congress emphasizing the need for streamlining the U.S. permitting system. We also are working with DOI to improve the timing on publishing Federal Register notices. We have recommended that this responsibility be returned to state offices.

- **Washington State**

NWMA is working closely with our Olympia lobbyist to oppose the Governor’s cap and trade and climate legislation that would drive up energy and operating costs. We are working with the Department of Ecology to develop a Chemical Action Plan for lead that is reasonable, appropriate and achievable and is based on a cost-benefit analysis to ensure that limited resources are allocated to where they will make the most improvement. NWMA is actively seeking alliances and working with other groups to improve Washington’s business climate.

- **Representation before Federal Agencies**

NWMA, on a regular and continuing basis, represents member and member companies’ interests with the various land management and regulatory agencies to ensure that any problems that surface are solved in a reasonable manner and in a reasonable time.

- **EPA Rulemakings**

NWMA is representing its members' interests in several rulemakings pending before the Environmental Protection Agency, including TRI, NPDES Stormwater permits and diesel particulate matter. Our efforts resulted in EPA withdrawing a rule that would have required monitoring of stormwater discharges at inactive mine sites.

- **Rulemaking Comments**

NWMA is providing a voice for its members by submitting comments on proposed rulemakings that affect the mining industry. In addition to the EPA rulemaking, we have submitted comments to agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior.

- **Operations in Foreign Countries**

NWMA has helped several member companies who are experiencing problems with operations in foreign countries. NWMA has written letters to government officials and Chamber of Mines in foreign countries emphasizing the environmental and social responsibility of the North American mining industry, the environmental regulations which govern mining in the United States, and the importance of an efficient permitting system and security of tenure to attracting mineral investment.

In addition to its work on regulatory and legislative issues, NWMA's Annual Meeting provides timely short courses, the industry's best annual technical program, and a high caliber trade show -- education, training, networking and fun all in one location.