

March 11, 2025

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

The 100+ undersigned organizations are writing on behalf of our millions of members and supporters to express our extreme opposition to two bills sponsored by U.S. Senator Steve Daines (S. 239 and S. 362). These bills will allow a coal mining company to bypass existing law and to proceed with a massive expansion, which would result in up to 375 million tons of greenhouse gas pollution (nearly 8% of the annual total for carbon dioxide emissions in the United States). This Climate Bomb legislation would allow Signal Peak Energy to avoid basic federal oversight and to export all of its coal to Asia.

The Signal Peak coal mine is an underground, long-wall coal mining operation north of Billings, Montana. It is currently seeking permission for a massive expansion to continue mining 176 million tons of coal. Based upon the carbon content of the coal, combustion would result in approximately 375 million tons of carbon pollution, an amount greater than the annual emissions of all but 16 countries in the world today. At a time when it's more important than ever to make climate progress, Sen. Daines' bills significantly sacrifice our climate for a company rife with corruption, scandal, and a litany of safety violations.

Signal Peak Energy recently ended a federal criminal probation period for willfully lying to federal mine regulators about serious injuries to workers and for willfully dumping toxic mine waste into an area intended to supply replacement water for people harmed by the mine. In addition to its criminal background, Signal Peak, its former executives, and its owners have an arm-length rap sheet of criminal activity and non-compliance with environmental and worker safety laws. The company's lawlessness was chronicled in the New York Times: *A Faked Kidnapping and Cocaine: A Montana Mine's Descent Into Chaos*. An assistant U.S. Attorney called the mine a "den of thievery." In the past five years, Signal Peak, its executives, and employees have been convicted of or pled guilty to embezzlement, money laundering, drug trafficking, and illegal gun possession. In the past five years, two owners of the Signal Peak Coal Mine (Gunvor Group and FirstEnergy Corp.) have collectively been fined over \$1.1 billion for bribery and fraud.

Senate Bills S. 239 and S. 362 seek to allow — without environmental scrutiny — large-scale and extremely destructive underground mining of coal at the Bull Mountains Mine. The mining of federal coal was halted because the operation had not been subject to an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act to fully consider the mine's climate impacts. In determining that the mine needed an EIS on its climate impacts, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals stated that "the coal from this project is expected to generate more GHG emissions than the single largest source of GHG emissions in the United States." The U.S.

Office of Surface Mining is currently conducting that review, but either one of Sen. Daines' bills would fundamentally undermine or entirely eliminate the environmental review process.

Finally, Signal Peak's large underground mining operation harms surface landowners, water resources, and wildlife. The mine has dewatered many important springs that originate from a perched aquifer above the mine. These springs provide essential water for wildlife and livestock. They are critical to long-running ranching operations that now have to find replacement water. The mine has caused extensive subsidence of the surface leading to disruption and harm to existing landowners and their livelihoods. Since the Bull Mountains Mine began operations in 2008, the company has directly or indirectly forced multiple ranchers off the land and out of the Bull Mountains.

If S. 239 and S. 362 are enacted, this massive mine expansion would proceed, unchecked, allowing for the release hundreds of millions of tons of carbon emissions into our atmosphere. We respectfully request that this legislation be rejected, whether as stand-alone legislation or considered as part of a larger package of bills. The future of the climate depends on it.

Sincerely,

Earthjustice
Sierra Club
Protect Our Winters
Earthworks
Western Environmental Law Center
The Wilderness Society
Indigenous Environmental Network
1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations
198 Methods
350.org National
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
Center for Biological Diversity
Citizens Coal Council
Climate Equity Policy Center
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Electrify Now
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Movement Rights
Ocean Conservation Research
Oil and Gas Action Network
Oil Change International
ReGenerous Cities, LLC
Scientist Rebellion, Turtle Island
Teachers Insurance Annuity Association-Divest!

Turtle Island Restoration Network
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Arizona Health Professionals for Climate Action (AZ)
Don't Waste Arizona
Lynn Canal Conservation (AK)
Native Village of Dot Lake Alaska
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
350 Bay Area Action (CA)
Benicians for a Safe and Healthy Community
Good Neighbor Steering Committee of Benicia
Idle No More SF Bay
Resource Renewal Institute
Natural Capitalism Solutions (CO)
Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GA)
350 Hawaii (HI)
Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice (IL)
Appalachian Citizens' Law Center, Inc. (KY)
Kentucky Resources Council
Boston Catholic Climate Movement (MA)
Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility
Baltimore Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter Veterans For Peace (MD)
CASA
Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition (MI)
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness (MN)
Save Lake Superior Association
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Montana Environmental Information Center (MT)
Northern Plains Resource Council
350 Montana
Bridger Bowl Ski Area
Bull Mountain Land Alliance
Citizens for Clean Energy
Families for a Livable Climate
Friends of 2 Rivers, Inc.
Gallatin Valley Sunrise
Montana Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate
Montana Sierra Club
Park County Environmental Council
Resilient Helena
Sleeping Giant Citizens Council
NC Climate Justice Collective (NC)
Central Jersey Coalition Against Endless War (NJ)
Divest NJ
New Energy Economy (NM)
New Mexico Environmental Law Center

Pueblo Action Alliance
Great Basin Water Network (NV)
350 Brooklyn (NY)
Coalition Against the Rockaway Pipeline
Color Brighton Green
Gas Free Seneca
Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers
New York Climate Action Group
New York Progressive Action Network
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
North Country Earth Action
NY Climate Advocacy Project
NY Clinicians for Climate Action
Putnam Progressives
Seneca Lake Guardian
NW Energy Coalition (OR)
Raging Grannies
Renewable Northwest
Athens County's Future Action Network (OH)
Breathe Project (PA)
Concerned Health Professionals of Pennsylvania
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Between the Waters (SC)
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance (SD)
Terra Advocati (TX)
350 Seattle (WA)
Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light
JUJustice Washington
Okanogan Highlands Alliance
Healthy Climate Wisconsin (WI)
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Mining Impact Coalition of Wisconsin
Wisconsin Environmental Health Network
Coal River Mountain Watch (WV)
Rise Up WV
Yellowstone-Teton Clean Cities (WY)