

December 15th, 2025

Dear Member of Congress,

The 183 undersigned organizations, Tribes, companies and elected officials are writing on behalf of our millions of members and supporters to express our strong opposition to H.R. 1366, The Mining Regulatory Clarity Act (MRCA). The legislation includes sweeping provisions that would weaken the already outdated 1872 Mining Law and give even more control over our public lands to the mining industry. **We ask you to oppose The Mining Regulatory Clarity Act.**

Most mining in the United States is governed under a 150-year-old, extremely permissive law enacted when Ulysses S. Grant was president. The law disempowers frontline communities, has no environmental guardrails, and doesn't require mining companies to pay a royalty on the billions of dollars of publicly owned minerals they extract. This law governs mining on public lands that are currently being dismantled by the administration and their Congressional allies with active threats to sell off millions of acres of our lands, roll back protections such as National Monuments and mineral withdrawals in secret, and firing thousands of workers whose jobs are essential for the future existence of our public lands. Additionally, recent executive orders were signed invoking emergency powers to increase domestic mining and processing of minerals, including those by foreign owned mining companies. They cover not just critical minerals, but others like gold. The executive order explicitly calls for agencies to prioritize mining above all other uses of public lands, and aims to provide funding and loans for mining projects, as well as accelerate permitting processes under the guise of the Defense Production Act. If you combine the antiquated mining law, the recent EO's, and the administration's efforts to dismantle our public lands, along with the now unpredictable compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (due to President Trump's executive actions) communities are now more at risk from mining harms than they were even 10 years ago.

History already paints a clear picture of the risks posed by irresponsible, deregulated mining for critical resources across the country. The EPA estimates that 40% of headwaters and 50% of lakes have been contaminated by hardrock mines, decimating watersheds and the communities that depend on them for freshwater, including drinking water. Recent research reveals that the vast majority of critical mineral resources in the United States are located within 35 miles of Native American reservations. As demand for hardrock minerals grows domestically and globally, it is critical that we ensure mining laws and standards protect communities and the environment while strengthening and securing our supply chains. Unfortunately, the MRCA would take us backward, not forward, and create more conflict over mines, not less.

First, the MRCA would allow mining companies to claim indefinite numbers of millsites¹ on public land, without meaningful limitations, where multinational mining companies can permanently dump toxic waste and construct infrastructure like pipelines and roads. These millsites could block public lands from being used for more suitable purposes, such as renewable energy projects, watershed protection, cultural resource access, and recreation. This provision would remove any effective limits on millsites and eliminate the requirement that such claims be located only on non-mineral land, a key feature that prevents lands with valuable minerals from being buried under waste or made inaccessible.

Second, several additional provisions contained within MRCA would weaken, if not negate, over a century of precedent that has limited the amount of damage to public land caused by our permissive mining law. According to current law, operators must first prove that there are in fact valuable minerals on a mining claim before they gain the right to conduct large-scale operations on those claims. Additionally, operators cannot conduct operations outside of their claims without obtaining further permits. MRCA could render these requirements meaningless by codifying a regulation that defines all activities related to mining under the term "operations," even if they are not directly on a mining claim. This could allow mining companies to build pipelines, roads, and powerlines and conduct other activities across public lands without ever having to get a permit for them.

The MRCA does not contain any meaningful limits to prevent abuses of the millsite provision. It states that mining companies may use public lands in accordance with an approved plan of operations. But that is of little assistance given the bill grants mining companies an unlimited, statutory right to use those lands—a right that cannot be denied in a mining plan of operations. The offered protections are thus no protections against the giveaway of public lands.

Finally, MRCA includes a savings clause that states mining companies still have to prove that there are valuable mineral deposits on claims within lands that have been withdrawn from mining. However, the exclusion of similar language for claims on unwithdrawn lands could be read by a court to imply that Congress intended to eliminate the requirement for such checks on unwithdrawn lands, which make up the vast majority of public lands. Altogether, these sections essentially give mining companies a nearly unlimited right to dump waste across an indefinite number of acres of public lands under the proposed millsites provision.

This bill's provisions will have a devastating impact on frontline communities, cultural resources, and sensitive ecosystems. Instead of passing this legislation, Congress should enact true reforms to our mining laws such as those identified by the 2023 Interagency

¹ Section 42 of the Mining Law provides that the holder of a valid mining claim may also claim nearby non-mineral-bearing land to support its mining claim. Such nonmineral land is known as a "mill site," and no mill site "shall exceed five acres." 30 U.S.C. § 42.

Working Group on Mining Laws, Regulations, and Permitting, especially those that would close loopholes for foreign companies, improve environmental standards, and create competitive leasing to balance the nation's clean energy mineral needs with other public land uses. We urge you to oppose the passage of S. 544 & H.R. 1366, whether as a standalone bill or as a part of a larger legislative package.

Sincerely,

1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations
350 Bay Area Action
350Hawaii
A2 (Anthropocene Alliance)
Access to Thrive
Alaska Clean Water Advocacy
Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association
Alaska Wilderness League
Alliance for the Wild Rockies
Amigos Bravos New Mexico
Appalachian Citizens' Law Center
Arizona Faith Network
Arizona Mining Reform Coalition
Arizona Trail Association
Arizonans for Community Choice
Basin and Range Watch
Becky Daggett, Mayor of Flagstaff, AZ (as an individual)
Biofuelwatch
Bitterrooters for Planning
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance
Black Hills Preservation Project
Bold Visions Conservation
Cabinet Resource Group
California Environmental Voters
Californians for Western Wilderness
CalWild
Cascade Forest Conservancy
Cascadia Wildlands
CDT Preservation Alliance
Center for Biological Diversity
Chilkat Indian Village
Circle Z ranch
Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior
Citizens to Protect Smith Valley (NV)
Climate and Community Institute

Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection
Colorado Citizens Against ToxicWaste Inc
Concerned Citizens Retired Miners Coalition
Conservation Northwest
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship
Continental Divide Trail Coalition
Corona de Tucson Preservation Alliance
Day One
Deer Tail Scientific
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice Action
Earthworks
EcoFlight
Emily Mine Information Group
Environmental Protection Information Center - EPIC
Esker Cycles
Friends of Sonoita Creek
Friends of the Amargosa Basin
Friends of the Bitterroot
Friends of the Clearwater
Friends of the Inyo
Friends of the Kalmiopsis
Friends of the Santa Cruz River
Friends of the Sonoran Desert
Gallatin Wildlife Association
Gila Resources Information Project
Global Witness
Grand Canyon Trust
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
Great Basin Resource Watch
Great Basin Water Network
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
GreenLatinos
High Country Conservation Advocates
Idaho Conservation League
Idaho Rivers United
Imperial Valley Equity and Justice
Inclusive Development International
Indigenous Environmental Network
Information Network for Responsible Mining
Investor Advocates for Social Justice
Izaak Walton League Rapid City SD Chapter
Jeff and Karen Ives
Kalmiopsis Audubon Society

Kalmiopsis Guides Association
Kettle Range Conservation Group
Klamath Forest Alliance
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
League of Conservation Voters
Living Desert Alliance
Living Rivers & Colorado Riverkeeper
LNE Engineering and Policy
Local Environmental Action Demanded (LEAD) Agency, Inc.
Los Padres ForestWatch
Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance
Lynn Canal Conservation
Madrean Archipelago Wildlife Center
Malach Consulting
Maricopa Audubon Society
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Mining Impact Coalition of Wisconsin
MiningWatch Canada
Montana Chapter Sierra Club
Montana Environmental Information Center
Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment
Native American Land Conservancy
Native Village of Fort Yukon
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature For All
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nevada Conservation League
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
Next 100 Coalition
Nicole Palese PLLC
Noowuh Knowledge Center
North Carolina League of Conservation Voters
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Norton Bay Watershed Council
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Oregon Wild
Our Roots Multi-Cultural Center
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Patagonia Area Resource Alliance
Patagonia, Inc.
Pipe Line Awareness Network for the Northeast
Prairie Hills Audubon Society (of Western SD)

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Protect Thacker Pass
Protect the Kobuk
Rachel Carson Council
Responsible Jewelry Transformative
River Alliance of Wisconsin
Rivers Without Borders
Rock Creek Alliance
Rural Arizona Engagement
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
San Pedro 100
San Xavier District of the Tohono O'odham Nation
Save Lake Superior Association
Save Our Cabinets
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Save our St. Vrain Valley, Inc.
Save the Scenic Santa Ritas
Save the South Fork Salmon
Sheep Mountain Alliance
Sierra Club
Sierra Protection Action Network
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sky Island Alliance
Smith River Alliance
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Southwest Research and Information Center (SRIC)
Sustainable Ocean Alliance
Sustainable Tucson
The Becoming Project INC
The Calabasas Alliance
The Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah
The Native Village of Dot Lake
The Ocean Project
The Wilderness Society
Tri-Valley CAREs
Tucson Bird Alliance (formerly Tucson Audubon)
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Universidad Popular
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Uranium Watch

Washington Wild
WaterLegacy
Weber Sustainability Consulting
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs
Western Shoshone Defense Project
Western Shoshone Nation
Western Watersheds Project
Wild Arizona
Wild Connections
Wild Hope
Wild Horse Education
WildEarth Guardians
Wildlands Defense
Wildlife for All
Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve