



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Witnesses: Federal Government Must Stop Its Regulatory Assault on Mining in America

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an [oversight hearing](#) entitled “EPA vs. American Mining Jobs: The Obama Administration’s Regulatory Assault on the Economy.” This hearing examined the onerous federal regulations and abusive actions by the Obama Administration, particularly by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), that have cost thousands of American jobs and blocked the production of essential minerals and raw materials that are used in everyday products and providing affordable energy.

“The Obama Administration’s ‘war on coal’ can be felt throughout the country, from Logan County, West Virginia to Farmington, New Mexico. Now it has now seemingly expanded to an all-out ‘war on mining jobs’ threatening workers from Chicken, Alaska, to Superior, Arizona. Americans deserve better from the EPA, there is no excuse for conducting armed raids on family owned businesses to look for, minor permit violations. Retroactively and prospectively vetoing permits, destroying high-paying-family-wage jobs, adversely affecting government economies, and making Americans more dependent on foreign sources of mined materials should not be the hallmark of the President Obama’s policy. It has been said that the EPA’s job is to crucify American industry, to bring them to heel. From armed raids to random permitting conditions, it appears they are doing their best,” [said Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn \(CO-05\)](#).

Witnesses who testified before the Subcommittee shared their concerns with federal government’s overreach of mining regulation in America.

[Edmund Fogels](#), Alaska’s Department of Natural Resources Deputy Commissioner highlighted the need for state supremacy in mining regulation. “When federal agencies, such as the EPA, seek to expand their mining regulation they are often duplicating existing, well-functioning programs. This duplication is not only inefficient, but it has real costs to the states and their residents who work to responsibly develop and protect natural resources.” Fogels added, “The states’ familiarity with the specifics of their respective local mining industries is irreplaceable, and federal agencies must recognize the states’ role in representing their citizens’ economic and environmental interests. States need to remain in the driver’s seat on mining regulation so we can protect our environment while also attracting the mining investment that protects our citizens’ economic security.”

[Chris Hamilton](#), **West Virginia Coal Association's Senior Vice President**, underscored the importance of coal mining in West Virginia where it's a *"\$30 billion industry accounting for over 60% of all business taxes"* and told the Subcommittee just how damaging the Obama Administration's *"all-out assault"* on the coal industry has been to West Virginia. Hamilton said, *"By using every resource available to him, every federal agency, President Obama has done everything in his power to obstruct West Virginia coal production and our industry from maintaining its viability in domestic and world markets."* Hamilton called the Obama Administration's actions a *"knock-out punch"* for the coal mining industry.

But it's not just coal mining that's under assault from the Obama Administration. Mining of strategic and critical minerals like gold is facing constant attacks from increased federal regulations and red-tape. **[Sheldon Maier](#)** from the **Fortymile Miners Association** in Alaska shared stories from their members about the heavy hand of the federal government. *"An EPA led crime task force with armed, fully-suited squads of 3-7 men entered 30 locations in the Fortymile...without the courtesy of introducing themselves to the mine operators."* Maier called these raids an *"unacceptable show of force."*

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