

H.R. 3844: the *Bureau of Land Management Foundation Act*
(Rep. Jody Hice, R-GA)

The Environmental Protection Agency's Gold King Mine disaster in August 2015 demonstrated how the federal government lacks the technical expertise and financial resources to competently address abandoned mine reclamation (AML). Further, current laws and policy impedes and dis-incentivizes voluntary and privately funded cleanup efforts. H.R. 3844 is part of a three-bill legislative package developed by the Committee on Natural Resources to comprehensively address the existing funding, technical and legal impediments to AML cleanup efforts.

FUNDING INCENTIVES

H.R. 3844, the Bureau of Land Management Foundation Act (Rep. Jody Hice, R-GA) establishes a new Bureau of Land Management Foundation to facilitate cleanup of AML and orphaned oil and gas well sites, by assisting federal land management agencies, state agencies, and non-profit organizations to raise funds for the purpose of AML cleanup on both federal and non-federal lands.

EDUCATION & SAFETY

H.R. 3734, the Mining Schools Enhancement Act (Rep. Crescent Hardy, R-NV) addresses the nationwide deficiency in mining expertise. Approximately 70% of the mining industry's technical leaders will reach retirement age within the next 10 to 15 years and there are few experienced engineers available to replace them. In addition, there has been a steady reduction in mining and mineral engineering programs across the country. This deficiency in expertise is exemplified by the fact that out of EPA's 15,326 employees, none are mining engineers. The bill amends the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act to distribute 70% of the funding made available for the Applied Science Tech Transfer Program to ABET accredited Mining Schools.

LIABILITY PROTECTION

H.R. 3843, the Locatable Minerals Claim Location and Maintenance Fees Act (Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-CO) establishes Good Samaritan provisions that incentivize private sector remediation of AML. The bill provides limited liability protections for industry and non-profit groups equipped with the technical expertise to deal competently with AMLs.

For more information, contact the House Committee on Natural Resources at (202) 226-9019.