

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leaders  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We are writing to urge you to not include unnecessary provisions requested by the National Mining Association (NMA) on behalf of the coal industry in any legislation being drafted to address the tremendous health and economic challenges the country is facing from COVID-19. The coal industry is taking advantage of the country's current circumstances to advocate for policies that are completely unrelated to the current crisis, policies that would in fact set back efforts to improve the health and lives of people across the country.

At a time when the country is facing a pandemic due to a respiratory illness, it is particularly egregious for the coal industry to advocate reducing the Black Lung Excise Tax, which is essential for providing medical services for approximately 25,000 sick miners. The rate is already scheduled to go down at the end of this Fiscal Year, and Congress' priority should be to extend the current rates for at least a full decade, which is necessary to ensure that these miners continue to receive treatment.

Cutting the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) fee would be equally shortsighted. AML projects create jobs and economic development in often-struggling communities while addressing longstanding health and environmental hazards. States have already been receiving less AML money in recent years due to declining coal production levels, and the program is slated to expire next year while a \$12 billion backlog in un-reclaimed abandoned mine sites remains. Again, Congress should be prioritizing the exact opposite of the NMA letter: reauthorization of the AML program and enhanced spending on reclamation projects that create jobs and new economic opportunities.

It is disappointing that the coal industry is advocating for policies that would not help the tens of thousands of sick, retired, and out-of-work miners that need immediate help and the communities that are still recovering from the legacy of environmental damage caused by the coal industry. We urge you to reject the NMA wish-list and focus federal resources on the workers, families, and communities that are being hardest hit by this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chair  
House Natural Resources Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew A. Cartwright". The signature is cursive and includes a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Matt Cartwright  
Member of Congress