



MINING REFORM LEGISLATION

Chair Grijalva's Hardrock Leasing and Reclamation Act of 2019 ends the obsolete system put in place by the Mining Law of 1872 and replaces it with a modern leasing system designed to protect American taxpayers and American public lands.

THE BILL WOULD:

- End the outdated claim-staking and patenting system that gives miners unfettered access to nearly all public land in the United States.
- Establish an 12.5% royalty on new mining operations—the same amount as oil and gas— and an 8% royalty on existing operations, except for miners with less than \$50,000 in mining income.
- Require meaningful tribal consultation
- Eliminate the exalted status that mining currently enjoys on public lands, leveling the playing field with all other uses of public lands—such as grazing, hunting, and energy development—allowing it to be managed through existing land-use planning processes.
- Make certain special lands off-limits to hardrock mining.
- Require mining operators to report data on the amount and value of minerals being extracted from public lands.
- Establish strong reclamation standards and bonding requirements.
- Create a fund to reclaim and restore abandoned mines and areas impacted by mining activities.

WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

- Multinational mining companies have extracted and estimated \$300 billion of metals from public land without paying a cent in royalties to the American people.¹
- Hardrock mining is the number-one toxic polluter in the United States. \$2.6 billion in taxpayer money was spent cleaning up abandoned hardrock mines between 1998 and 2007.²
- Hundreds of thousands of abandoned mines have polluted 40% of the headwaters of western watersheds.³ 50 million gallons of toxic wastewater – the equivalent of 2,000 tanker trucks – flows from hardrock mining sites every day.⁴
- Our most precious natural areas are constantly under threat from new mines because federal land managers say the Mining Law limits their ability to protect them.

¹ Earthworks https://earthworks.org/issues/1872_mining_law_reform_requirements/

² GAO <https://www.gao.gov/assets/130/126672.pdf>

³ EPA *Liquid Assets 2000: America's Water Resources at a Turning Point*. 2000.
<https://nepis.epa.gov/Exec/DisplayPDF.cgi/20004GRW.PDF?Dockey=20004GRW.PDF>

⁴ M. Brown, "50M gallons of polluted water pours daily from US mine sites." *Associated Press*. (February 20, 2019)
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