To require the Secretary of Energy to provide technology grants to strengthen domestic mining education, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 18, 2023

Mr. OWENS (for himself, Mr. COSTA, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. BOST, Mr. STAUBER, Mr. ROSENDALE, and Mr. WITTMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Energy to provide technology grants to strengthen domestic mining education, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “Technology Grants to Strengthen Domestic Mining Education Act of 2023” or the “Mining Schools Act of 2023”.

4 SEC. 2. TECHNOLOGY GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN DOMESTIC MINING EDUCATION.

5 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:
(1) BOARD.—The term “Board” means the Mining Professional Development Advisory Board established by subsection (d)(1).

(2) MINING INDUSTRY.—The term “mining industry” means the mining industry of the United States, consisting of the search for, and extraction, beneficiation, refining, smelting, and processing of, naturally occurring metal and nonmetal minerals from the earth.

(3) MINING PROFESSION.—The term “mining profession” means the body of jobs directly relevant to—

(A) the exploration, planning, execution, and remediation of metal and nonmetal mining sites; and

(B) the extraction, including the separation, refining, alloying, smelting, concentration, and processing, of mineral ores.

(4) MINING SCHOOL.—The term “mining school” means—

(A) a mining, metallurgical, geological, or mineral engineering program accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc., that is located at an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of
the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)); or

(B) a geology or engineering program or department that is located at a 4-year public institution of higher education (as so defined) located in a State the gross domestic product of which in 2021 was not less than $2,000,000,000 in the combined categories of “Mining (except oil and gas)” and “Support activities for mining”, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Energy.

(b) DOMESTIC MINING EDUCATION STRENGTHENING PROGRAM.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior (acting through the Director of the United States Geological Survey), shall—

(1) establish a grant program to strengthen domestic mining education; and

(2) under the program established in paragraph (1), award competitive grants to mining schools for the purpose of recruiting and educating the next generation of mining engineers and other qualified professionals to meet the future energy and mineral needs of the United States.
(c) Grants.—

(1) In General.—In carrying out the grant program established under subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall award not more than 10 grants each year to mining schools.

(2) Selection Requirements.—

(A) In General.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall select recipients for grants under paragraph (1) to ensure geographic diversity among grant recipients to ensure that region-specific specialties are developed for region-specific geology.

(B) Timeline.—The Secretary shall award the grants under paragraph (1) by not later than the later of—

(i) the date that is 180 days after the start of the applicable fiscal year; and

(ii) the date that is 180 days after the date on which the Act making full-year appropriations for the Department of Energy for the applicable fiscal year is enacted.

(3) Recommendations of the Board.—

(A) In General.—In selecting recipients for grants under paragraph (1) and determining the amount of each grant, the Sec-
retary, to the maximum extent practicable, shall take into consideration the recommendations of the Board under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (d)(3).

(B) SELECTION STATEMENT.—In selecting recipients for grants under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(i) in response to a recommendation from the Board, submit to the Board a statement that describes—

(I) whether the Secretary accepts or rejects, in whole or in part, the recommendation of the Board; and

(II) the justification and rationale for any rejection, in whole or in part, of the recommendation of the Board; and

(ii) not later than 15 days after awarding a grant for which the Board submitted a recommendation, publish the statement submitted under clause (i) on the Department of Energy website.

(4) USE OF FUNDS.—A mining school receiving a grant under paragraph (1) shall use the grant funds—
(A) to recruit students to the mining school; and

(B) to enhance and support programs related to, as applicable—

(i) mining, mineral extraction efficiency, and related processing technology;

(ii) emphasizing critical mineral and rare earth element exploration, extraction, and refining;

(iii) reclamation technology and practices for active mining operations;

(iv) the development of reprocessing systems and technologies that facilitate reclamation that fosters the recovery of resources at abandoned mine sites;

(v) mineral extraction methods that reduce environmental and human impacts;

(vi) technologies to extract, refine, separate, melt, or produce minerals, including rare earth elements;

(vii) reducing dependence on foreign energy and mineral supplies through increased domestic critical mineral production;
(viii) enhancing the competitiveness of United States energy and mineral technology exports;

(ix) the extraction or processing of coinciding mineralization, including rare earth elements, within coal, coal processing byproduct, overburden, or coal residue;

(x) enhancing technologies and practices relating to mitigation of acid mine drainage, reforestation, and revegetation in the reclamation of land and water resources adversely affected by mining;

(xi) enhancing exploration and characterization of new or novel deposits, including rare earth elements and critical minerals within phosphate rocks, uranium-bearing deposits, and other nontraditional sources;

(xii) meeting challenges of extreme mining conditions, such as deeper deposits or offshore or cold region mining; and

(xiii) mineral economics, including analysis of supply chains, future mineral needs, and unconventional mining resources.
(d) MINING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established an advisory board, to be known as the "Mining Professional Development Advisory Board".

(2) COMPOSITION.—The Board shall be composed of 6 members, to be appointed by the Secretary not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, of whom—

(A) 3 shall be individuals who are actively working in the mining profession and for the mining industry; and

(B) 3 shall have experience in academia implementing and operating professional skills training and education programs in the mining sector.

(3) DUTIES.—The Board shall—

(A) evaluate grant applications received under subsection (c) and make recommendations to the Secretary for selection of grant recipients under that subsection;

(B) propose the amount of the grant for each applicant recommended to be selected under subparagraph (A); and
(C) perform oversight to ensure that grant funds awarded under subsection (e) are used for the purposes described in paragraph (4) of that subsection.

(4) TERM.—A member of the Board shall serve for a term of 4 years.

(5) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Board—

(A) shall not affect the powers of the Board; and

(B) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made by not later than 180 days after the date on which the vacancy occurs.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2031.
