

Statement for the record submitted by Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY-AL)

Wyoming is the nation's leading coal producer by far. In 2015, Wyoming produced 42% of all coal mined in the United States. Wyoming also contributes the largest share of funding to the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program. In the last two fiscal years, Wyoming contributed over 55% of the national total of AML fee collections.

No state has been hurt more than Wyoming has been by the last eight years of the Obama policies aimed at killing our coal industry. The best solution for our coal communities in Wyoming and across the country is putting policies in place that will get our coal miners working again.

We have begun to implement key policies and pass legislation to lift the burden on this crucial industry.

At the same time, we need to ensure we have the resources necessary to clean up historic abandoned mine sites. The AML program has been a crucial source of funding for reclaiming abandoned mine lands.

The Department of the Interior assesses we currently have an excess of \$10.4 billion in backlog or unfunded liabilities. We need to ensure we don't take steps to accelerate disbursements out of the AML Fund at the expense of taking care of this backlog.

I am also concerned that we avoid taking any action that could diminish payments to Wyoming and other certified states. That is why I am offering an amendment to this bill to protect payments to Wyoming and other certified states.

It is also important as we consider RECLAIM or other legislation that would change the AML disbursement structure, that we remember the fee collection authority expires at the end of fiscal year 2021. At that point certified states like Wyoming will no longer be contributing to the program.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on these important issues.