



## WYOMING MINING ASSOCIATION

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November 19, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: WMA Support for HR 4776, the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act

Dear Chairman Westerman:

The Wyoming Mining Association (WMA) is a statewide trade organization that represents and advocates for 34 mining company members producing bentonite, coal, trona (natural soda ash), uranium, and lignite, as well as companies developing gold, copper, lithium, rare earths and critical mineral deposits. WMA also represents over 100 associate member companies, one electricity co-op, and two advanced nuclear power companies.

WMA writes today in support of the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED Act). We sincerely appreciate the introduction of this bipartisan bill aimed to improve America's permitting process.

The Wyoming mining industry has long faced significant challenges in permitting mining projects and expansions of existing operations. As referenced in a recent study, U.S. mine development timelines are second to last in the world. A 29-year process to open a mine, at a time when our nation desperately needs mineral independence, is unacceptable and we applaud the Committee's efforts to address this flawed process.

Protracted, costly, and uncertain mineral leasing and permitting processes thwart investment in the exploration and development of American mineral resources. In his 2015 report entitled, Economic Value and Mining in the United States, Mr. Mark Fellows noted that, "Of all the developed nations, unexpected and often unnecessary delays in obtaining [mineral leases and] mining permits afflict the U.S. most severely. Despite being blessed with a vast reserve of mineral resources, the U.S. only accounts for 7 percent of world-wide spending on mineral exploration and production and is currently reliant on a population of mature mining projects. The average remaining life of active mines in the U.S. and the share of projects in advance development have also fallen in recent years." This still rings true today, while society's demand for minerals to supply various industrial and infrastructure needs continues to rise.

By comparison, other countries such as Australia and Canada have efficient mine permitting processes in place which limit permitting processes to around two years. This is regardless of the fact that these countries have stringent environmental standards for their mining sectors that are similar to those in the United States.

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The NEPA process in particular has evolved into an extremely inefficient and untimely aspect of federal leasing and permitting decisions. The timeline for NEPA associated with mining projects is generally considered the longest part of the mining leasing and permitting process.

The NEPA process for coal mines in Wyoming is most often encountered when applying for a new coal leases or lease modification and then pursuing the leasing process and subsequent federal and state permitting processes. While little more than a process law with no impact on environmental protections, it has resulted in a quagmire for federal agencies. It has become a tool for project opponents and activists to delay and kill projects through abuse of the courts. It has been altered such that the NEPA review has become the decision document, and the Record of Decision a mere formality. After fifty-six years of implementation, expansion of legal standing, and litigation have resulted in Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents ballooning from approximately five hundred pages to several thousand pages.

The SPEED Act contains important provisions that address many of WMA's concerns, including, but not limited to:

- Prevents duplicative reviews at both the state and federal levels.
- Prohibits agencies from interjecting political preferences into NEPA reviews by clarifying that alternatives included in environmental documents must meet the purpose and need of the proposed action.
- Limits comments from cooperating agencies to their specific areas of jurisdiction and gives agencies discretion in considering new scientific research. This ensures that only pertinent information is considered, improving timelines, maintaining integrity, and bring more certainty to the process.
- Limits the scope of environmental review with specifics that environmental reviews for EAs and EISs must focus only on effects that are proximately caused by the project itself and may not include effects that are speculative or separate in place and time. This reform provides clarity to agencies and the public, reduces page counts so that stakeholders can meaningfully engage, and limits litigation.
- Establishes timelines and sideboards for judicial review under NEPA, codifying key pieces of the Supreme Court's decision in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado* (Seven County).
- Establishes sideboards so that plaintiffs have no more than 150 days to file a civil action against a final agency action. In addition, the judicial review provisions require plaintiffs to have standing, requiring that one must have submitted a comment on an action, and the comment must be "unique and substantive," and not a form letter. Plaintiffs must prove that they would suffer direct harm if their comments were not addressed. These provisions ensure that agencies have the opportunity to correct NEPA deficiencies before litigation and that claims are filed by those truly impacted by the underlying action and deserve special considerations.
- Requires courts to resolve NEPA-related cases within 180 days and NEPA-related appeals within 60 days. This provision reduces the time spent in litigation, thereby reducing delays and cost overruns.

The Wyoming Mining Association is pleased to support HR. 4776, the SPEED Act. Meaningful permitting and litigation reform to establish efficient permitting processes and predictable timelines is long past due.

Thank you for your kind attention and your work for our country.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Deti", is positioned above the printed name.

Travis Deti  
Executive Director