



EARTHWORKS

May 25, 2021

Dear Subcommittee Chair Leger-Fernandez and Ranking Member Young, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Earthworks and our members, we write to thank you for discussing the Requirements, Expectations, and Standard Procedures for Executive Consultation with Tribes (RESPECT) Act and urge its speedy passage. Earthworks is a national advocacy organization dedicated to protecting communities and the environment from the impacts of mineral extraction.

The RESPECT Act makes many sorely-needed improvements to how the Federal Government interacts with Tribal Nations and other communities. It is necessary for any meaningful environmental justice in the United States.

The RESPECT Act standardizes Federal Government consultations with Indigenous communities with respect to policies and activities that impact Tribal lands and resources. Currently, consultations occur inconsistently across federal government agencies, despite the incredible power imbalance. Too often this results in the communities having little say and no recourse. This dismissive attitude directly descends from the colonization and settlement foundation of this country's history, and it has no place in this modern day and age.

The RESPECT Act provides more clarity and certainty to the consultation process. It also reduces the power imbalance by allowing Tribes to seek judicial review of inadequate consultation processes.

Earthworks has as our mission meaningful reform of the General Mining Law of 1872. That settler-colonial era statute still governs hardrock mining on many traditional and ancestral Indigenous lands in the West. We appreciate the House Natural Resources Committee including the RESPECT Act in mining reform legislation last Congress.

We look forward to further debate and passage of the RESPECT Act so the Federal Government can better protect all of people from environmental injustice.

Sincerely,

Aaron Mintzes,
Senior Policy Counsel

Dedicated to protecting communities and the environment from the adverse impacts of mineral and energy development while promoting sustainable solutions.

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