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## Issue 23 - September 9, 2020

### **This Week in COVID-19 News**

Washington, D.C.'s clock is ticking. With only eight weeks until the general elections, the Senate returned from its summer recess one week ahead of the House. Congress faces a looming deadline to avoid a government shutdown, as well as continuing negotiations over potential additional economic stimulus legislation. The National Mining Association's (NMA) efforts to advance mining's interests with congressional committees and federal agencies continue, focused on education and coalition building, including public communications regarding the essential nature of mining, safety actions taken by our members, and contributions being made by NMA member companies. Plus we have updates on the economy and how energy and mining markets are faring.

### **Safety Share**

The U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration offers an extensive library of [safety and training resources](#).

## COVID Legislative Update

The Senate reconvened this week following its August recess and plans to be in session through October 9. The House will return for floor votes next week. The Senate is getting off to a slow start with a week of nomination votes followed by a procedural vote Thursday on the newest [Senate Republican COVID-19 relief legislation](#). A [summary](#) of the bill was released and the latest bill continues to include NMA-supported bipartisan minerals language. The outcome of the procedural vote on Thursday will determine whether the Senate will further consider the Republicans' newest proposal. There is no expectation that the new draft will attract the necessary 60 bipartisan votes to allow further consideration, bringing us no closer to a new COVID-19 relief bill able to pass both chambers. However, Speaker Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin have reportedly reached an agreement that no COVID-19 relief legislation would be attached to the end of September and end of the federal fiscal year deadline for Congress to pass legislation to continue general federal government spending among other targeted continuation legislation.

## Upcoming House Energy Legislation

House leaders are preparing a legislative package of bills to invest in energy innovation and clean energy development for floor consideration later this month. What measures are ultimately included in the energy policy bill, however, remain to be seen. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer described the package as bills that "have broad support from across the aisle and from business and environmental groups, who together recognize that Congress must lead in promoting a cleaner, more sustainable future that drives innovation and helps us create good jobs for American workers."

The measure is most likely to consist of bills moved through the Energy and Commerce Committee and Science, Space and Technology Committee. One piece of NMA-supported

bipartisan legislation said to be in the upcoming package is House Critical Materials Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Eric Swalwell's (CA-15) Securing Energy Critical Elements and American Jobs Act of 2019 (H.R. 4481), which would authorize the Department of Energy to carry out the Energy Critical Elements (ECE) Program for the purposes of research, development, demonstration, and commercial application to assure the long-term, secure and sustainable supply of ECEs to satisfy U.S. national and economic security. NMA will continue to provide updates on the packages as additional details become known.

## **NMA Board and Annual Members Meeting**

The NMA's Fall Board of Directors and Annual Members Meeting will be held **October 6 - 8, 2020**, as a virtual meeting. Building upon lessons learned from the most recent June board meeting, the fall meeting will be broken into a series of shorter meetings held over three days. A preliminary agenda, registration and sponsorship information [are available here](#). Please note that only individuals who register for each meeting will receive meeting information and be permitted access to each session. [Sponsorship opportunities](#) are available.

## **MINExpo INTERNATIONAL® 2020 Rescheduled to 2021**

The NMA is pleased to announce that the 2020 MINExpo show has been rescheduled to **September 13-15, 2021**, at the Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. NMA member companies exhibiting in MINExpo INTERNATIONAL 2020 received an email on September 3 outlining the options to participate in the rescheduled MINExpo INTERNATIONAL® 2021. Responses are due by November 23, 2020. If you did not receive an email, please contact show management at [minexpo@heexpo.com](mailto:minexpo@heexpo.com).

Thank you for your cooperation and patience as we worked through the complicated rescheduling process, and for your continued engagement and participation in MINExpo INTERNATIONAL. Our highest priority is the health, well-being and safety of exhibitors, attendees, stakeholders and their respective families and colleagues, as well as our event

partners in Las Vegas. Accordingly, NMA will develop and institute protocols to ensure that the global mining community is able to meet safely and hold an exciting, effective event in September 2021. We are committed to regular communications with exhibitors and attendees regarding the preparation and holding of MINExpo INTERNATIONAL 2021.

If you are a NMA member company and interested in exhibiting, please complete the [exhibitor interest form](#). NMA members receive a 40 percent discount on exhibit space and receive priority space selection for future shows.

## **NMA and Third-Party Voices**

The NMA and its third parties continue to place editorials across the country on the importance of our industry to the country and economy.

[National Coal Transportation Association's magazine "Coal Transporter"](#) features a column from NMA's Rich Nolan on coal exports as the lead story.

The [Dallas Morning News](#) (TX), [Colorado Springs Gazette](#) (CO), [Pottstown Mercury](#) (PA), [Exton Daily Local](#) (PA), [Swarthmore Times Herald](#) (PA), [Lansdale Reporter](#) (PA), [Delaware County Daily Times](#) (PA), [Phoenix Reporter and Item](#) (PA) and [Elko Daily Free Press](#) (NV) carry an op-ed by Michael Stumo, CEO of the Coalition for a Prosperous America (CPA), in which he argues that Congress should speed the domestic production of key metals and minerals in order to compete with China.

## **Economic Impact**

The U.S. Department of Labor reported unemployment [dropped sharply in August](#).

[Detailed employment statistics](#) revealed the U.S. economy added 1.4 million jobs in August and the unemployment rate plummeted 1.8 percentage points to 8.4 percent.

American Road and Transportation Builders Association reported the value of **highway construction work** reached \$9.12 billion in July, up from \$8.35 billion the prior year.

U.S. and global factory output also **continued to grow** in August.

The U.S. trade deficit reached its **highest point since 2008** in July as imports continued to outpace exports.

In the mortgage industry's best quarter in years, lenders issued **\$1.1 trillion in home loans** between April and June.

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said interest rates are **likely to remain low for years**.

## **Energy and Mining News**

**Mining.com reported** that "copper easily cleared the pivotal \$3 a pound level on Monday as the recovery in the Chinese economy, the world's top consumer of the metal, gains momentum." The report notes that copper prices are at a 26-month high due to a strong Chinese economic rebound.

**The Wall Street Journal reported** that, as natural gas prices continue to rise, coal's share of electricity generation is expected to tick up in 2021.

A **Department of Energy report** argued that retrofitting four of Wyoming's PacifiCorp-owned coal-fired power plants with carbon capture technology could extend the useful lives of several of those plants, generating new jobs and millions of dollars for Wyoming's economy over the next three decades while reducing CO2 emissions at significantly lowered costs to ratepayers.

In a recent **Today in Energy release**, the U.S. Energy Information Agency (EIA) reported that coal-based electricity generating capacity in the U.S. is retiring, as tighter air emission standards and decreased cost-competitiveness relative to other power resources make

coal-fired power plants less economical. From 2011 to mid-2020, 95 gigawatts (GW) of coal capacity was closed or switched to another fuel and another 25 GW is slated to shut down by 2025.

[Argus](#) reported coal-fired generation last month in the PJM Interconnection experienced its smallest year-on-year decline since April 2018.

Argus Coal Daily (subscription) reported that all three Hampton Roads coal terminals increased shipments in July compared to June. July exports were 48 percent above June, but still 7.2 percent below July of last year.

The International Energy Agency [Clean Coal Centre](#) analysis concluded that “the share of coal of total energy supply increased between 1973 and 2018, while the share of oil shrunk by nearly 15 percentage points, as the share of energy supply from China surged at the expense of supply in developed economies.”

[EIA’s recent Today in Energy](#) release included analysis showing that in May U.S. energy imports and exports were about equal. “Changes in domestic production and declines in global demand for energy since mid-March in response to COVID-19 have shifted energy trade balances back in the direction of net imports, especially for U.S. crude oil and petroleum products.”

[The Department of Energy announced](#) that it will be investing \$72 million in federal funding to support the development and advancement of carbon capture technologies under two funding opportunity announcements (FOAs).

## **[NMA COVID-19 Resources](#)**

The NMA team is maintaining a comprehensive suite of online resources for [Coronavirus Assistance and Response](#). Resources include both [health, safety and business assistance](#) for NMA members and a chronicle of the American [mining industry’s response to the current crisis](#).

## Tell Us About Your COVID-19 Response

We are continually gathering information about how the COVID-19 crisis is affecting our members. Information will be used in discussions with policymakers and decision makers at all levels of government and will help illustrate how mining is giving back to the communities where we live and work. Please [contact Ashley Burke](#) with ongoing accounts of your responses to the global pandemic.

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