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This Week in COVID-19 News

As some states are turning to plans for reopening and identifying ways to support the economy, the National Mining Association (NMA) remains actively engaged with multiple branches of government to ensure that mining's interests are considered as the nation responds to the COVID-19 pandemic. The effort includes 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 both the crisis and its impact on energy and mining markets.

SAFETY SHARE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [COVID-19 website](#) includes a ["self-checker" to assess symptoms](#) and determine whether you need testing. (*New York Times* published: "Your nose itches. [Is it allergies, flu or the coronavirus?](#)")

Reopening America's Economy

Following up on last week's news that NMA's Rich Nolan joined the White House's Great American Economic Revival Industry Groups, the NMA followed up with a [letter](#) to Larry Kudlow, Director of the National Economic Council, emphasizing the importance of the mining industry to the nation's economic recovery.

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued guidance and recommendations to assist businesses in reopening. OSHA's guidance includes simple steps to [prevent worker exposure](#) to coronavirus. CDC's guidance includes its "[Top 10 Tips](#) to Protect Employees' Health."

As the nation moves toward reopening, [governors are increasingly at the forefront](#) of decision-making regarding what steps to take. National Mining Association's COVID-19 resource page on health, safety and business assistance includes an interactive map providing up-to-date [state-by-state updates and directives](#).

Paycheck Protection Program Increase

As expected, the U.S. House of Representatives swiftly followed the Senate last week in passing the [Paycheck Protection Program Increase Act](#) and on Friday, April 24, 2020, President Trump [signed the measure into law](#).

Funding for the program now totals \$670 billion, but a [backlog of loan applications was waiting](#) for the second tranche of money and some estimates indicate that the program may [exhaust its funding for the second time](#) by early next week.

The U.S. Small Business Administration published an [interim final rule](#) providing additional guidance on the administration of the program and also updated its [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document. Due to controversy around some reported recipients of PPP funds so far, the SBA and the U.S. Treasury issued a [statement](#) yesterday concerning a

review of some lending under the PPP.

COVID-19 and Taxes

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service issued three guidance documents on tax implications of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

[Revenue Procedure 2020-23](#) allows eligible partnerships (and limited liability companies treated as partnerships for tax purposes) to file amended tax returns and issue amended Schedules K-1 to partners for 2018 and 2019 tax years. [Notice 2020-26](#) and [Revenue Procedure 2020-24](#) provide guidance regarding certain net operating loss (NOL) provisions in the CARES Act. Notice 2020-26 allows an extension of time for taxpayers to apply for an expedited tax refund for certain NOLs and Rev. Proc. 2020-24 provides additional guidance regarding certain elections and refund requests for NOLs.

Additionally, the Joint Committee on Taxation released a detailed [description of the tax provisions](#).

Focus on Recovery

Regulatory developments important to the economic recovery continue to roll out in agency actions not directly related to COVID-19, as well. The past week saw major developments in several of these matters that are favorable to mining, including:

- The [Department of Energy](#) released new recommendations from the Nuclear Fuel Working Group, which included important steps to restore American nuclear energy leadership by establishing a national uranium reserve. See [NMA's press release](#) in support of these recommendations.

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.

New this week, [RealClearEnergy](#) carries an op-ed by Conor Bernstein in which he argues we must ensure the security of coal-fired generation for the sake of energy reliability.

[Eastern New Mexico News](#) ran an op-ed from Jim Constantopoulos, a geology professor at Eastern new Mexico University, calling for greater use of antimicrobial copper to combat viral outbreaks. And Matthew Kandrach's op-ed on the antimicrobial properties of copper and other minerals continues to get pickup and was placed in the [Arizona Capitol Times](#) (AZ).

U.S. Virus Response Updates

U.S. House leaders walked back proposals [to allow remote voting](#) during the coronavirus crisis. The House also abandoned plans to [return to Washington](#) on May 4, although the Senate [plans to reconvene](#) then.

House members voted to create a [new oversight body](#) to monitor federal coronavirus expenditures.

The House Republican Study Committee and its Health Care Task Force wrote to House and Senate leadership [providing policy recommendations](#) for the next wave of government actions regarding COVID-19.

U.S. Congressional Budget Office published "[Projections of Output, Employment, and Interest Rates](#) and a Preliminary Look at Federal Deficits for 2020 and 2021."

Mining COVID-19 Impact News

The Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency published guidance on [continuing control room operations](#) in critical infrastructure industries during the pandemic response.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published an [interim final rule](#) on continuous emissions monitoring and quality-assurance requirements during the COVID-19 national emergency.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation published a "Pandemic Preparedness and [Operational Assessment](#)."

[Uranium prices are increasing](#) amid COVID-19 mine shutdowns as supply drops.

The World Silver Institute notes that global silver production will [decrease 4.6 percent](#) this year as a result of temporary suspensions relating to COVID-19 from mine operations in Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and Canada.

Chinese coal producers are setting [a floor price for domestic coal](#) amid a steeper competitive price drop than expected. China is experiencing a coal oversupply coupled with weaker power demand created by COVID-19. That said, China's electric power generation [increased 1.2 percent](#) in the first half of April and is resulting in increased coal generation. Restarts at more businesses and factories have lifted power consumption, with electricity use in the non-ferrous metals, pharmaceutical, electronics, chemicals, steelmaking and machinery industries now reaching or exceeding year-earlier levels. Railway haulage volumes have largely returned to normal, and civil aviation, ports and water transportation services are all operating normally.

The World Steel Association reports that global steel production in March was 147.1 million metric tons in March 2020, [a 6 percent decrease](#) compared to March 2019. Citi indicates that U.S. steel output was down only 1 percent through the first quarter 2020, while EU production was down 10 percent and China down 1.2 percent. But on a recent webinar,

S&P Global predicted the steel market may begin to recover in May, assuming steel and coke plants come back online and major demand sectors like auto manufacturing and construction begin to reopen operations.

Industries restarting operations that will benefit minerals miners include **automakers**.

NMA COVID-19 Resources

National Mining Association 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**.

The NMA Communications team also developed a new set of graphics on minerals uses in healthcare, which can be accessed **here**.

Tell Us About Your COVID-19 Response

National Mining Association is 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 on-going accounts of your responses to the global pandemic.

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