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MINE Update

MINING INDUSTRY NEWS E-COMM UPDATE

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Brought to you by the National Mining Association

This Week in The News

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took one of its biggest deregulatory steps yet by announcing it will move to rescind the Obama-era endangerment finding underpinning all federal carbon regulations. Other deregulatory efforts also advanced and the Senate inched closer to joining the House for the summer Congressional break. The National Mining Association (NMA) remains focused on actively engaging to advance mining's interests at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Plus, we have updates on how the mining and energy markets are faring.

Safety Share

The Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration maintains an [extensive collection of safety shares](#) on a wide variety of topics.

House Education and Workforce Leadership Presses DOL to Fix Silica Rule



Yesterday, House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman Tim Walberg (R-Mich.) urged the Department of Labor's (DOL) Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to rewrite its Biden-era silica rule. In a letter which was joined by six other members of the committee, including past-Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), the Chairman stated: "Simply put, the Biden-Harris administration's actions failed to enhance worker safety when it limited protections for miners and imposed hundreds of millions of dollars in cost." The committee members went on to urge MSHA to consider initiating a new rulemaking "to prevent serious economic hardship."

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#). A copy of the committee's press release can be found [here](#).

The silica rule was finalized on April 18, 2024. The original compliance date for coal operators was April 15, 2025, and a year later for metal/nonmetal mines. In April of this year, at the request of a coalition of plaintiffs led by the NMA, the Eighth Circuit stayed all the rule's compliance dates pending judicial review.

In addition to taking legal action, the NMA has been working with Congress and the Trump administration to education members and officials on the issue. The NMA will continue to work with Congress and the administration to get DOL to fix this poorly conceived rule.

House Resources Committee Introduces Bipartisan NEPA Reform Legislation



Last week, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) and Congressman Jared Golden (D-Maine) introduced the bipartisan Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act (H.R. 4776). The bill amends the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to promote efficiencies in the permitting process and incorporates key pieces of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition, et al., Petitioners v. Eagle County, Colorado, et al.* (Docket No. 23-975) to provide more clarity for agencies preparing environmental documents and courts reviewing NEPA claims. Introduction of the bill followed the full committee’s oversight [hearing](#) earlier in the week titled, “Permitting Purgatory: Restoring Common Sense to NEPA Reviews.” Please find links to the bill text [here](#); the section by section [here](#); one-pager [here](#); and Chairman Westerman’s press release [here](#). Additionally, please find a link to the NMA’s memo detailing some of the bill’s provisions of specific interest to the mining industry [here](#). The NMA will continue to work with committee staff to make improvements to the legislation and support the committee’s efforts to craft a NEPA and permitting reform package.

Trade Update

Trade negotiations continue to accelerate ahead of the August 1 deadline for reciprocal trade agreements. The U.S. and the European Union recently announced a framework trade deal that would lower U.S. tariffs on EU goods—including autos, pharmaceuticals and semiconductors—to 15 percent, while eliminating EU tariffs on key U.S. exports such as industrial products. However, many implementation details remain unresolved. In parallel, U.S. and Chinese officials are working to extend a pause on mutual trade retaliation agreed to in May. Without an extension, tariffs will revert to the escalated 125 percent on both sides, in addition to existing duties, pending final approval by President Trump.

In a separate development, President Trump announced today that India will face an additional 25 percent tariff rate along with a “penalty” tied to its continued purchases of military equipment and energy from Russia—adding new friction to an already sensitive bilateral trade negotiation targeting a fall conclusion. Meanwhile, the administration continues to negotiate reciprocal trade agreements with over 50 countries and the NMA is actively engaged in advocating for member priorities. If you would like to be involved, we encourage you to join the NMA’s Trade Issues Working Group. Members are also reminded to join our weekly trade calls every Wednesday at 1:00 PM Eastern for up-to-date intelligence and discussions.

Proposed Class I Rail Merger



Union Pacific (UP) and Norfolk Southern (NS) [plan to merge](#) in an \$85 billion deal. The deal will combine UP’s western system with NS’s eastern network under one carrier.

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) must approve the merger under [post-2001 rules](#), which require it to enhance competition and serve the public interest. UP and NS aim to file within six months, with closing possible by early 2027. STB has four members split by party, and President Trump is expected to appoint a fifth before review.

Shippers and other stakeholders will be able to weigh in during the public comment process. The NMA will continue to provide updates as the STB review progresses.

Senate Considers Lanny Erdos to lead OSMRE



Today, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a [markup](#) to consider several Department of Energy and Interior nominations, including Lanny Erdos to serve as Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE). Erdos previously held the position during the first

Trump administration and was unanimously confirmed by the Senate at that time. His nomination was reported out of committee on a bipartisan vote of **11-9** and will now move to the full Senate for consideration.

The NMA submitted a letter of support for Mr. Erdos's confirmation, which can be found [here](#).

The committee also advanced the nominations of Mr. David Eisner to be Assistant Secretary of Energy for International Affairs, Ms. Audrey Robertson to be Assistant Secretary of Energy for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, and Mr. Timothy Walsh to be Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management.

Separately, the Senate confirmed David Wright on a party-line vote to continue leading the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). He has served on the NRC since 2018 and was designated its Chairman in January 2025. His new term runs through 2030.

EPA Proposes to Rescind the 2009 Endangerment Finding in Tailpipe Emissions Reconsideration Rulemaking

The EPA this week [announced](#) a [proposal](#) to rescind the 2009 endangerment finding as part of a rulemaking reconsideration package on vehicle emissions standards. This action follows an announcement in March that EPA had kicked off a formal reconsideration of the finding with the Office of Management and Budget and other agencies, along with prior regulations and actions that rely on it. In this action, EPA proposes: (1) a primary legal basis to repeal all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions standards for light-duty, medium-duty and heavy-duty vehicles and engines as the best reading of Clean Air Act section

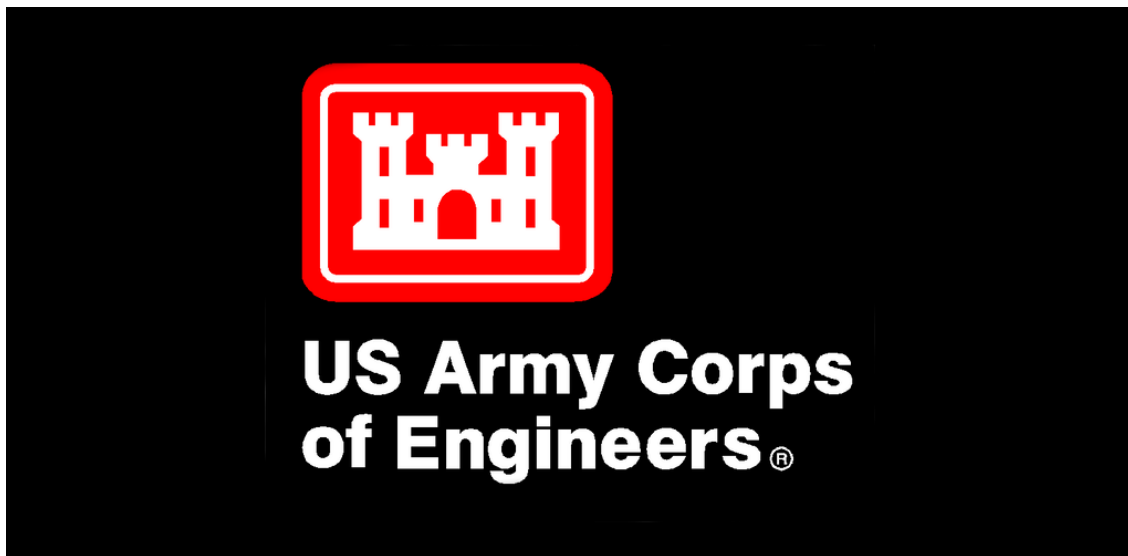
202(a), which the agency asserts does not allow it impose emission standards to address global climate change concerns, and therefore supports rescinding the endangerment finding; (2) an alternative basis to rescind the Administrator's prior findings in 2009 because the EPA unreasonably analyzed the scientific record and because developments cast significant doubt on the reliability of the findings, relying heavily on a 2025 Department of Energy (DOE) [report](#) evaluating the impact of GHGs on U.S. climate; and (3) another alternative basis to repeal GHG emission standards because no requisite technology for vehicle and engine emission control can address the global climate change concerns identified in 2009 without risking greater harms to public health and welfare. Comments on EPA's proposal are due on Sept. 21, 2025. DOE is also accepting comment on its report for 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

EPA Withdraws Biden Project Emissions Accounting Proposed Reconsideration Rule

The EPA recently published a [withdrawal](#) of a Biden-era [proposed reconsideration rule](#) under the Clean Air Act titled "Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) and Nonattainment New Source Review (NNSR): Regulations Related to Project Emissions Accounting." According to EPA, "there is insufficient justification for the proposed rule revisions" and "the revisions could result in unnecessary additional burden on regulated entities, States, Tribal and local air agencies that implement the [New Source Review (NSR)] regulations." EPA asserts that "[t]hese burdens could disincentivize or delay environmentally and economically beneficial projects at stationary sources, including efficiency improvements." EPA's now withdrawn Project Emissions Accounting reconsideration rule responded to concerns raised by environmental organizations in an administrative petition for reconsideration of the [2020](#)

[Project Emissions Accounting rule](#) finalized during the first Trump term. The NMA joined nineteen other industry associations and groups in filing [comments](#) on the Biden administration's Project Emissions Accounting reconsideration rule. The coalition's comments recommended that EPA retain the 2020 Project Emissions Accounting rule because it is consistent with the Clean Air Act and the 2020 NSR reforms.

Army Corps of Engineers Publishes Interim Final Rule to Revise Its NEPA Regulations



As part of a wider federal government effort, the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) recently published an [Interim Final Rule](#) (IFR) rescinding the bulk of its regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), while simultaneously publishing a second [IFR](#) that replaces the previous NEPA implementing procedures with a new regulation. The Corps asserts that the new NEPA implementing procedures are a more faithful implementation of the statute as amended by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 than its old

procedures. As with other IFRs issued on NEPA, while this rule is effective immediately upon publication, the new NEPA procedures will "have no effect on ongoing NEPA reviews where the Army, following CEQ guidance, has determined it will continue to apply to existing NEPA applications." **The Corps is also accepting comments on these actions until Aug. 4, 2025.** As with other IFRs issued on NEPA, while this rule is effective immediately upon publication, the new NEPA procedures will "have no effect on ongoing NEPA reviews where the Corps, following CEQ guidance, has determined it will continue to apply to existing NEPA applications." **The Corps is also accepting comments on these actions until Aug. 4, 2025.** Additional information is available [here](#).

Pro Energy Governor Takes Over NGA



On July 25th Gov. Kevin Stitt was named chair of the National Governors Association (NGA) during its summer meeting in Colorado Springs. During the event, Stitt launched a new initiative called "Reigniting the American Dream" to remind people that it is still within reach despite political divisions. The governor announced his plan to highlight stories of the American dream across

the country. "We want every young person to know that the American dream is alive and well, and they can chase their dreams here," Stitt said. As Governor of Oklahoma, Kevin Stitt has always emphasized an "all-of-the-above" approach to energy, supporting oil, gas, coal and renewable sources. Oklahoma has historically relied on coal production; Stitt believes in drawing from a variety of energy sources.

Lawmakers Amend North Carolina's 2030 Climate Goal

North Carolina's legislature overturned Gov. Josh Stein's veto of a sweeping energy bill, wiping out the state's 70 percent carbon-cutting deadline and giving Duke Energy new power to charge customers in advance for future plants. Senate Bill 266 repeals the interim 2030 target adopted in 2021, however, the 2050 net-zero mandate remains. Grid reliability stresses and concerns have forced multiple states to reconsider their renewable portfolio standards.

Alliance and Alpha Among Kentucky Mine Safety Honorees



The 2025 Harlan County Safety Days contest brought together dedicated mine rescue teams from across the region to test their skills, teamwork and technical expertise. Over several days, teams competed in various categories, demonstrating their preparedness for emergency situations and their commitment to safety in the mining industry. NMA member company teams who were recognized included Alliance’s Warrior Mine Rescue team and Alpha Metallurgical Resources’ Paramount Contura team. Congratulations to all participants and those that secured top placements in their respective categories.

NMA and Third Parties In the News

[The White House](#) quotes Rich Nolan in its release on the President’s AI Action Plan.

The [Las Vegas Sun](#) (Nev.), [Weirton Daily Times](#) (W.Va.), [Hammond Star](#) (La.), [Steubenville Herald Star](#) (Ohio), [Deseret News](#) (Utah), [Yahoo News](#) (USA), [Salem News](#) (Ohio), [Johnstown Tribune Democrat](#) (Pa.), [The Missoulian](#) (Mont.), [Chicago Star](#) (Ill.), [Grand](#)

[Junction Daily Sentinel](#) (Colo.), [Ravalli Republic](#) (Mont.), [West Virginia News](#) (W.Va.), [Elko Daily Free Press](#) (Nev.), [Fairbanks Daily News Miner](#) (Alaska), [Lisbon Morning Journal](#) (Ohio) and [East Liverpool Review](#) (Ohio) carry an op-ed by Rich Nolan in which he argues AI is already disrupting the job market, but the modern mining industry, and its need for diverse skillsets, is hiring.

From our third parties, [Monticello Times](#) (Minn.) carries an op-ed by Matthew Kandrach, president of Consumer Action for a Strong Economy, in which he argues while data center developers have signed deals to keep nuclear power plants running — and to even bring mothballed reactors back online — they should take the same exact approach with America’s coal fleet.

Mining and Energy News

[Reuters](#) reported that the Department of Defense plans to continue investing in critical minerals projects to ensure a diverse American supply of the building blocks for weapons and many electronics.

[Argus](#) reported that the White House has added three more coal plants to the dozens getting extensions in complying with 2024 mercury and air toxics rules, decisions that may provide plant operators greater leeway to move forward with existing plans rather than to delay retirements.

[Politico Pro](#) reported steelmaker Cleveland-Cliffs is having “very good” conversations with the Energy Department about reworking a \$500 million Biden administration grant aimed at decarbonizing its operations to instead support continued use of fossil fuels, CEO Lourenco Goncalves said on a recent earnings call.

[**Washington Examiner**](#) reported that as China has tightened its hold over the critical mineral and rare earth supply chains in response to the Trump administration's sweeping tariffs, mining executives are calling for the U.S. to invest in its own stockpile of minerals.

[**Argus**](#) reported that coal exports out of Hampton Roads, Virginia, fell in June from a year earlier because continued declines in metallurgical export markets offset gains in some seaborne thermal coal markets.

[**E&E News PM**](#) reported that Indonesia has agreed to lift restrictions on nickel exports to the U.S. — material the government linked to forced labor last year — as part of a trade deal reached with President Trump.

[**Climatewire**](#) reported that a steel plant in Middletown, Ohio has rejected federal funding to produce hydrogen-based green steel and is now doubling down on coal and relying on steel tariffs to help turn a profit.

The [**World Steel Association's**](#) recent survey found that world crude steel production was estimated at 151.4 million metric tons (Mt) in June 2025, a 5.8 percent decrease compared to June 2024.

In a recent [**Today in Energy**](#) report, EIA says it expects that U.S. coal plants will remain relatively well-stocked through the end of next year, based on their latest monthly energy outlook. EIA estimates that power plants had 124 million short tons of coal on-site at the end of June.

[**Utility Dive**](#) reported that with PJM capacity prices setting another record with a 22 percent jump in its latest capacity auction (hitting \$329.17/MW-day price cap across its region), "the Trump administration will likely seize on the auction results to justify keeping thermal power plants, namely coal, in PJM from retiring, according to analysts with Capstone."

[Visual Capitalist](#) graphically illustrates the top world coal producing countries in 2024 based on recent Statistical Review of World Energy report data. The world produced an estimated 9.24 billion metric tons of coal, up 0.9 percent year over year.

[Greenwire](#) reported that the White House released a sweeping action plan last week to boost development of artificial intelligence, a move that could influence the build-out of the grid and the electricity mix for decades.

[Politico Pro](#) reported that federal energy regulators approved requests by grid operators for much of the central U.S. to fast-track certain power projects to stave off potential shortfalls as electricity demand booms.

[Reuters](#) reported that prices of coking coal futures in China hit their ceiling for a second successive trading session last Tuesday, amid market chatter about potential government inspections in China's major coal production hubs that might lead to supply disruptions.

[Climatewire](#) reported that U.S. funding for the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) is on the chopping block this budget season.

[Utility Dive](#) reported on Bank of America Institute analysis predicting that electricity demand will grow 2.5 percent annually through 2035 amid growth in building and industrial electrification, data centers and electric vehicles.

[Reuters](#) reported Union Pacific will seek approval to buy Norfolk Southern in an \$85 billion deal to create the first U.S. coast-to-coast freight rail operator.

[Energywire](#) reported that Mark Christie issued a stark warning last Thursday after he attended his last meeting as chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. "The reliability threat is not on the future horizon. It is now here," Christie said, pointing to the recent capacity auction of PJM Interconnection,

the nation's largest grid operator.

[Washington Examiner](#) reported that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission approved a request to transition the Palisades nuclear plant in Michigan back to operational status.

[Argus](#) reported that U.S. coal generation increased from year-earlier levels for a sixth consecutive month in May, gaining ground on natural gas and wind generation as overall electricity demand dipped.

[Greenwire](#) reported that Silicon Valley-based electric vehicle maker Lucid and mining companies have formed the Minerals for National Automotive Competitiveness Collaboration to focus on boosting domestic production and forging agreements between the two sectors.

[Hellenic Shipping](#) reported that global coal demand rose by 1.5 percent in 2024 to reach 8.79 billion metric tons, a new record. But global coal demand may remain broadly unchanged this year and next according to the International Energy Agency's Coal Mid-Year Update forecast.

[Argus](#) reported that the results of the latest PJM Interconnection capacity auction show the region has reached a "reliability crisis." according to Mark Christie, the outgoing chair of the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Commodity Prices

Commodity Prices - Snapshot

Metals Prices				
	Date	Price	Date	Price
Cobalt Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/21/25	\$15.12	7/25/25	\$15.12
Copper Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/21/25	\$5.61	7/29/25	\$5.63
Gold Spot Price (\$/ounce)	7/21/25	\$3,362.60	7/29/25	\$3,328.24
Lead Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/21/25	\$0.91	7/29/25	\$0.91
Lithium Spot Price (\$/kg)	7/21/25	\$9.47	7/29/25	\$10.19
Molybdenum Spot Price (\$/kg)	7/21/25	\$66.21	7/29/25	\$65.90
Nickel Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/21/25	\$7.03	7/29/25	\$6.92
Silver Spot Price (\$/ounce)	7/21/25	\$38.47	7/29/25	\$38.20
Steel HRC Price (\$/mt)	7/21/25	\$872.73	7/29/25	\$852.52
Steel Rebar Price (\$/mt)	7/21/25	\$442.31	7/29/25	\$465.63
Zinc Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/21/25	\$1.29	7/29/25	\$1.27
Energy Prices				
	Date	Price	Date	Price
Coal Price - Austr. Prem. Coking Coal Futures (\$/mt)	7/21/25	\$190.00	7/29/25	\$193.50
Coal Spot Price - Central Appalachian (\$/st)	7/18/25	\$79.00	7/25/25	\$79.00
Coal Spot Price - Newcastle futures (\$/mt)	7/21/25	\$109.80	7/29/25	\$115.05
Coal Spot Price - Rotterdam futures (\$/mt)	7/21/25	\$104.75	7/29/25	\$104.50
Natural Gas Spot Price - Henry Hub (\$/mmbtu)	7/16/25	\$3.43	7/23/25	\$3.07
Uranium Spot Price (\$/lb)	7/21/25	\$71.25	7/28/25	\$71.30

Sources: publically available data from eia.gov, dailymetalprice.com, tradingeconomics.com, sgxgroup.com, investing.com

CORESafety



In the July edition of CORESafety TV, we discuss CORESafety's Module Number six, Occupational Health and Well-being.



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