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**Committee:** House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy & Mineral Resources  
**Event:** [Legislative Hearing on H.R. 280, H.R. 1366, H.R. 3872, H.R. 4018, H.R. 4068 and H.R. 4090](#)  
**Date:** September 3, 2025  
**Time:** 10:15 AM  
**Place:** 1324 Longworth House Office Building

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***Member Toplines:***

Chair Pete Stauber (R-MN-08)<sup>1</sup>: Stauber praised President Trump’s energy agenda for putting the U.S. on a path toward energy independence and dominance, arguing that the bills being considered are essential to unlocking America’s vast energy resources. He summarized the bills, citing their goals of strengthening coal production, streamlining permitting under the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA), and addressing hardrock mining challenges, including reforms to leasing, mill sites, and abandoned mine remediation. Stauber also highlighted measures to advance deep-sea mining, expand mineral leasing, and codify the Trump administration’s executive orders, stressing that these reforms are vital to bolstering domestic energy production and safeguarding national security.

Ranking Member Yassamin Ansari (D-AZ-03): Ansari argued that the bills being considered would cut Americans out of critical decisions, undermining both community trust and long-term supply chain security. She criticized efforts to roll back “common sense” mining regulations and extend deregulation to the deep sea, warning of risks to fisheries, oceans, and relationships with U.S. allies. Ansari argued that the fastest way to advance mining projects is through genuine community engagement and a whole-of-supply-chain approach, not by “propping up” coal or “silencing” local voices.

***Witness Toplines:***

[Adam Seuss, Acting Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management](#): Seuss underscored the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) commitment to advancing President Trump’s energy dominance agenda, stressing that America’s abundant natural resources are central to economic growth and national security. He argued that coal remains a vital component of the nation’s energy mix and highlighted the administration’s efforts to maximize mineral production and processing. Seuss expressed strong support for the legislation under consideration, noting that it will expand offshore mining opportunities and further strengthen domestic energy production.

[Hans Smit, President and CEO, Ocean Minerals and Moana Minerals](#): Smit emphasized the strategic importance of seabed mining, urging swift passage of a bill To unleash America's

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<sup>1</sup> Opening statements for Chair Stauber and Ranking Member Ansari were not available online at the time of this memo’s distribution.

offshore critical minerals and resources ([H.R. 4018](#)), aimed at expanding U.S. seafloor mineral development. He warned that China's dominance in refining nickel, cobalt, and rare earths poses a major threat to U.S. national security and argued that seabed minerals are essential for diversifying supply chains. Smit stressed that the bill would provide clarity, strengthen cooperation with allies, and leverage American technology to secure critical minerals and reduce reliance on strategic competitors.

[Travis Deti, Executive Director, Wyoming Mining Association](#): Deti highlighted Wyoming's vast coal reserves and their role in providing affordable, reliable energy to the nation. He voiced strong support for [H.R. 280](#) and [H.R. 4068](#), emphasizing the need to streamline the NEPA process and accelerate coal leasing to meet rising electricity demand, particularly with the growth of AI-driven power needs. Deti argued that expanding coal availability is essential to ensuring energy security and stability in the years ahead.

[Steve Feldgus, Former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral Management, Department of Interior](#): Feldgus cautioned that efforts to cut public input and fast-track projects will backfire, creating longer delays and more litigation rather than accelerating development. He stressed that successful projects depend on agencies having the resources to conduct thorough reviews and secure community support. Feldgus argued that many of the bills under consideration would undermine sustainable development and erode public trust, ultimately hurting long-term mineral and energy progress.

[Debra Struhsacker, Founder, Women's Mining Coalition](#): Struhsacker argued that the bills under consideration would help remove longstanding barriers to domestic mineral development, including burdensome permitting, flawed court rulings, and land withdrawals. She stressed that mineral security is national security, calling for streamlined approvals, new investment in mining R&D, and an abandoned hardrock mine fund to restore the U.S. as a global leader in mineral production.

### **Major Takeaways:**

- Republicans highlighted coal as an indispensable baseload resource to meet growing demand, particularly with the rise of AI-driven energy needs.
  - Rep. **Harriet Hageman** (R-WY) said her bill nullifying [Secretarial Order 3338](#) and expediting leasing is vital to meeting rising demand.
  - Rep. **Mike Collins** (R-GA-10) argued that NEPA has primarily become a tool to block mining projects, explaining that his bill, [H.R. 4068](#), will help curb NEPA constraints by codifying Trump's EO to expand categorical exclusions for coal leasing.
  - Rep. **Troy Downing** (R-MT-01) pointed to [H.R. 1366](#) as necessary to resolve uncertainty from the Rosemont decision and protect mineral supply chains.
  - Rep. **Jeff Crank** (R-CO-05) criticized Colorado's early coal plant closures, arguing that renewables are more expensive than fossil fuels, and calling coal the most reliable and affordable baseload.

- Rep. **Jeff Hurd** (R-CO-03) argued that coal is critical as energy demand surges with AI, while renewables risk making the U.S. more reliant on adversaries.
- Democrats stressed that wind and solar are the cheapest, fastest-growing energy sources and should be prioritized over coal.
  - Ansari warned that advocating for coal while sidelining renewables will keep energy bills high, harm the environment, and cut communities out of decision-making.
  - Committee Ranking Member **Jared Huffman** (D-CA-02) called coal destructive and too expensive to subsidize, urging Republicans to stop restricting wind and solar development in order to make energy more affordable.
- Rep. **Seth Magaziner** (D-RI-02) spotlighted the stalled Revolution Wind project as a test case for the future of renewables under the Trump administration.
  - He explained that the project was already 80 percent built, contracted to deliver one-third of Rhode Island's electricity at a low rate, and had passed all regulatory approvals.
  - Magaziner warned that the unexplained stop-work order by the federal government threatens jobs and energy affordability, and represents the Trump administration's continued targeting of wind energy projects.
  - He pressed Acting Assistant Secretary Suess to explain the decision; Suess explained that the review was consistent with the President's January 20th [executive memo](#) and offered no additional details.
- Rep. **Susie Lee** (D-NV-03) warned that new DOI permitting requirements are stalling solar development critical to Nevada's economy and energy future.
  - She cited bipartisan concerns, including a letter on the matter from Nevada's Republican Governor **Joe Lombardo** to the Interior Secretary, and noted that requiring Secretary-level signoff on nearly every solar permit amounted to "weaponization," not reform.
  - Lee asked Suess directly if he would commit to working with federal, state, and industry leaders to resolve the issue. He responded that he would "never say no to meeting" with stakeholders, but offered no policy commitment.
- Republicans emphasized the merits of cutting red tape to unleash U.S. mineral production and reduce reliance on foreign adversaries.
  - Rep. **Pat Fallon** (R-TX-04) praised [H.R. 3872](#) for opening federal lands for the extraction of minerals such as lithium, arguing that it would be better for the environment to mine domestically than abroad.
  - Committee Chair **Bruce Westerman** (R-AR-04) called hardrock minerals foundational to national security, noting China controls about 60 percent of production; he also highlighted the importance of the Ambler District where 49 of 50 critical minerals could be mined.

- Westerman also urged the expansion of copper and domestic mineral exploration, stressing that permitting restrictions are destroying the mining industry.
- Seabed mining sparked sharp disagreement between parties.
  - Reps. Crank and **Mike Ezell** (R-MS-04) argued ocean floor deposits are vital to break China's hold on critical minerals, with Ezell touting the role of [H.R. 4018](#) in strengthening supply chains.
  - Rep. **Luz Rivas** (D-CA-29) warned that seabed mining poses extreme risks to the environment and highlighted the importance of input from coastal states.
- Democrats argued that sidelining public participation will backfire with lawsuits and delays.
  - Rep. **Debbie Dingell** (D-MI-06) opposed [H.R. 4068](#), explaining that it undermines community input in federal actions. Instead, she called for bipartisan permitting reform that balances efficiency with environmental protections.
  - Ansari and other Democrats repeatedly warned that excluding local communities erodes trust and pushes opposition into the courts, making projects slower and less viable.