



Our membership and services span the globe

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November 14, 2011

The Honorable Mike Crapo
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Re: Barrasso/Heller Amendment to the Energy and Water Appropriations Minibus

Dear Senator Crapo:

The Northwest Mining Association (NWMA) writes to ask for your support in stopping the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (“Corps”) from expanding the federal government’s regulation of private and public lands under the Clean Water Act (CWA). On behalf of our members, we urge you to vote in support of the Barrasso/Heller amendment to the Energy and Water Minibus. The amendment prohibits use of any funds to implement the agencies’ fast-track attempt to federalize our nation’s waters and lands, resulting in a dramatic adverse impact on job creation and our nation’s unhealthy reliance on foreign sources of strategic and critical minerals.

This important amendment would stop the Corps and the EPA from codifying a policy that drastically expands federal authority beyond congressional intent and recent Supreme Court decisions to regulate essentially all areas where water flows in the United States, blurring the lines of state and federal authority and negatively impacting our nation’s job-creating industries.

Our members are committed to the protection and restoration of America’s water resources, however, EPA’s proposed policy would expand the scope and reach of federal jurisdiction beyond anything that has ever existed under the Clean Water Act (CWA), switching the burden from the government to the individual property owner to demonstrate that a particular feature is not a “water of the United States.” This results in dramatic consequences for those who operate in or near water and poses a serious threat to the hundreds of thousands of American jobs the mining industry provides and supports.

NWMA is a 116 year old, 2,000 member, non-profit, non-partisan trade association based in Spokane, Washington. NWMA members reside in 42 states and are actively involved in exploration and mining operations on public and private lands, especially in the West. Our diverse membership includes every facet of the mining industry including geology, exploration, mining, engineering, equipment manufacturing, technical services, and sales of equipment and supplies. NWMA’s broad membership represents a true cross-section of the American mining community from small miners and exploration geologists to both junior and large mining companies. More than 90% of our members are small businesses or work for small businesses. Most of our members are individual citizens.

We urge you to support this important amendment, which will prevent EPA and the Corps from significantly increasing regulatory barriers to economic growth throughout our nation’s economy.

Sincerely,

Laura Skaer
Executive Director