

Senate Joint Resolution No. 8—Senators Rhoads; Brower, Cegavske, Gustavson, Halseth, Hardy, Horsford, Kieckhefer, McGinness, Roberson and Settlemeyer

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging Congress to enact legislation or take other appropriate action to expedite and streamline the requirements for conducting mining operations in this State.

WHEREAS, Since the earliest days of statehood, the State of Nevada has been known for containing vast deposits of minerals located throughout the State, including copper, gold, silver, lithium, molybdenum, barite and other minerals essential to the security, economy, technological innovation, conventional and renewable energy infrastructure and daily life of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Because of the availability of those mineral deposits, mining is an important industry in the State of Nevada and has traditionally provided many high-paying jobs for local communities and has contributed to the communities in other ways such as investing in infrastructure and services for those communities; and

WHEREAS, The reliance of the United States on foreign sources of many important minerals impedes economic recovery, limits economic growth and creates vulnerabilities in the chain of supply that potentially threatens the national security of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Increasing the amount of production of Nevada's minerals, including, without limitation, copper, gold and silver, that are exported worldwide would aid in the reduction of the trade deficit of the United States and would thus be highly beneficial to the national economy; and

WHEREAS, Mining supports a significant portion of the local economies of rural Nevada and creates jobs that pay employees an average of \$81,800 per year; and

WHEREAS, Exploration for minerals is a source of capital investment in Nevada, supports the discovery of new mineral deposits that may become future or expanded mines, contributes significantly to state and local tax revenues and provides other economic benefits to Nevada and local economies in Nevada; and

WHEREAS, Because approximately 87 percent of the land in Nevada is managed and controlled by the Federal Government, most mineral exploration and mining activities occur entirely or partially on federal land and permits must be secured for those activities from



the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service; and

WHEREAS, The permitting processes of the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service for mineral exploration and mine development are the source of significant and problematic delays that cost jobs, injure Nevada's economy and impede national economic interests; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 2,500 high-paying mining jobs are currently being delayed for an unspecified and unreasonable period because those permitting processes often require 3 years or longer to complete; and

WHEREAS, Delays in the permitting process for mineral exploration projects are creating a significant delay in the rate of discovery of new mineral deposits that may be developed into new or expanded mines; and

WHEREAS, Delays in the permitting process and the resulting reduction in the rate of discovery of new mineral deposits are significant reasons that gold and silver production from mines in Nevada has declined dramatically in the last decade, which has resulted in unrealized jobs and tax revenues that would otherwise be generated from those mines; and

WHEREAS, The process of the Bureau of Land Management for the review and publication of notices in the Federal Register announcing the intent of the Bureau of Land Management to prepare an environmental impact statement and the availability of draft and final environmental impact statements often add up to 1 year to the mine permitting process; and

WHEREAS, Expediting the permitting processes of the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service to materially diminish the time required to approve mineral exploration and mine development projects would make a significant contribution to Nevada's economy and the national economic interests by increasing mining and mineral exploration jobs and increasing tax revenues from mining, including, without limitation, revenues from sales and use taxes, net proceeds taxes, modified business taxes and property taxes; and

WHEREAS, Implementing procedures to expedite the permitting of mineral exploration and mine development projects is of equal importance to the economy of Nevada and the United States as the similarly expedited permitting schemes already endorsed for renewable energy projects; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the 76th Session of the



Nevada Legislature hereby urge Congress to enact legislation or take other appropriate action directing the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, the Director of the Nevada State Office of the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Supervisor for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest to pursue, together with the appropriate governmental entities in this State, methods and procedures that expedite or may expedite the permitting processes for mineral exploration and development of mines in this State; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management are hereby urged to eliminate any burdensome and unreasonable delays associated with the process of the Bureau of Land Management for the review and publication of notices in the Federal Register; and be it further

RESOLVED, That, cooperatively with the appropriate governmental entities in this State, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, the Director of the Nevada State Office of the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Supervisor for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest are hereby urged to establish streamlined permitting time frames consistent with the goals of this State for economic recovery and with national economic interests; and be it further

RESOLVED, That such a streamlined permitting process must include the following requirements:

1. The Bureau of Land Management should approve or deny any project that requires a notice within 15 calendar days after the date of submittal of a complete notice application;
2. The United States Forest Service should approve or deny any small exploration project that may be evaluated with a categorical exclusion within 4 months after the date of submittal of a complete application for the small exploration project;
3. The Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service should approve or deny any project that requires an exploration plan of operation within 4 months after the date of submittal of a complete application for the plan of operation;
4. The Bureau of Land Management's process for review and publication of notices in the Federal Register announcing the intent of the Bureau of Land Management to prepare an environmental impact statement or announcing the availability of a draft and final environmental impact statement should be completed in 2 weeks; and



5. The Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service should approve or deny a plan of operation for a mining project within 12 months after the date of submittal of a complete plan of operation for that mining project; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress is hereby urged to enact legislation or take other appropriate action directing the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, the Director of the Nevada Office of the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Supervisor for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest to provide quarterly progress reports to Congress, the Speaker of the Nevada Assembly, the Majority Leader of the Nevada Senate and the Governor of Nevada setting forth the following information:

1. A list specifying each proposed mineral exploration and mining project that the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service are reviewing and the date that the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service began reviewing each of those projects;

2. The anticipated target date on which each proposed mineral exploration and mining project permit will be approved or denied;

3. An assessment of the performance of the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service in meeting the streamlined permitting objectives;

4. If the streamlined permitting objectives have not or may not be met, a detailed explanation of the reasons for failing to meet those objectives; and

5. Any additional resources that the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service need to meet the requirements of the streamlined permitting process; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Congress is hereby urged to enact legislation or take other appropriate action directing the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, the Director of the Nevada State Office of the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Supervisor for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest to take all necessary steps to provide adequate staffing and resources consistent with achieving the streamlined permitting objectives; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of the United States Senate, the



Speaker of the House of Representatives and each member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.



