

Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
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Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
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Lipinski
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Luján Grisham
(NM)
Lujan, Ben Ray
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Lynch
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Maloney,
Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern

McNerney
Meeks
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Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sanchez, Linda
T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Wilson (FL)
Schakowsky

Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Takano
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Clay
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Walsh
Wasserman
Schultz
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
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Collins (NY)
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Connolly
Conyers
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Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Fox
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (MO)

Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
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Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
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Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
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Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
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Kelly (PA)
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King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
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McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris
Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Menger
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
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Negrete McLeod
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Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perry
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Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanchez, Linda
T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scahise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner

Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southernland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano

Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden

Walorski
Walz
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—11

Cárdenas
Cassidy
Diaz-Balart
Herrera Beutler

Himes
McCarthy (NY)
Miller, Gary
Perlmutter

Polis
Rush
Waters

□ 1345

Ms. SINEMA changed her vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL ENVOY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 301) to provide for the establishment of the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 402, nays 22, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 465]

YEAS—402

Aderholt
Alexander
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra

Benishak
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)

Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell

Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxy
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (MO)

Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Coble
Hensarling
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
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Lee (CA)
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LoBiondo
Loeb sack
Lofgren
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Lujan Grisham
(NM)
Luján, Ben Ray
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Maloney, Sean
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Marino
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCauley
McCollum
McDermott

McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris
Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Menger
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neom
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanchez, Linda
T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scahise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner

Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southernland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano

Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden

NAYS—22

Amash
Broun (GA)
Collins (GA)
Graves (GA)
Hudson
Jones
King (IA)
Lummis

Massie
McClintock
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Neugebauer
O'Rourke
Posey
Ribble

Rice (SC)
Sanford
Stutzman
Westmoreland
Woodall
Yoho

NOT VOTING—8

Cassidy
Diaz-Balart
Herrera Beutler

McCarthy (NY)
Miller, Gary
Perlmutter

□ 1353

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC AND CRITICAL MINERALS PRODUCTION ACT OF 2013

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 761.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 347 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 761.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1355

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 761) to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to more efficiently develop domestic sources of the minerals and mineral materials of strategic and critical importance to United States economic and national security and manufacturing competitiveness, with Mr. FORTENBERRY in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 761, the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act.

Not a day goes by when Americans don't use a product that is made from critical minerals. In fact, life as we know it in the 21st century would not be possible without these minerals. There would be no computers, no Blackberrys or iPhones. There would be no MRI, CAT scan, or X-ray machines. There would be no wind turbines or solar panels. Mr. Chairman, the list is exhaustive of these things that depend on critical minerals that make modern life possible.

Rare-earth elements, a special subset of strategic and critical minerals, are core components of these products in the 21st century. Yet despite the tremendous need for rare-earth elements, the United States has allowed itself to become almost entirely dependent on China and other foreign nations for these resources.

America has a plentiful supply of rare-earth elements, but roadblocks to the development of these crucial materials have resulted in China producing 97 percent of the world's supply. Our current policies are handing China a monopoly on these elements, creating a dependence that has serious implications on American jobs, on our economy, and on our national security.

Burdensome red tape, duplicative reviews, frivolous lawsuits, and onerous regulations can hold up new mining projects here in the U.S. for more than 10 years. These unnecessary delays cost American jobs as we become more and more dependent on foreign countries for these raw ingredients. The lack of America-produced strategic and critical produced minerals are prime examples of how America has regulated itself into a 100 percent dependence on at least 19 unique minerals. It has also earned the United States the unfortunate distinction of being ranked dead last when it comes to permitting mining projects. In 2012, the U.S. was ranked last, along with Papua New Guinea, out of 25 major mining countries on the pace of permitting. Mr. Chairman, I can't speak for Papua New Guinea, but the reason the U.S. Government is so slow to issue new mining permits is very simple: government bureaucracy.

H.R. 761, introduced by our colleague from Nevada, Mr. AMODEI, will help us to end the foreign dependence by streamlining government red tape that blocks America's strategic and critical mineral production. Instead of waiting

for over a decade for mining permits to be approved, this bill sets a goal of total review process for permitting at 30 months.

□ 1400

Now this isn't a hard deadline, Mr. Chairman. It can be extended. But it is a goal to push the bureaucrats into action on these important infrastructure projects. It shouldn't take a decade to get a project built for minerals that we need in our everyday life and for our national security.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, above all, this is a jobs bill. The positive economic impact of this bill will extend beyond just the mining industry. For every metal mining job created, an estimated 2.3 additional jobs are generated. And for every nonmetal mining job created, another 1.6 jobs are created.

This legislation gives the opportunity for American manufacturers, small businesses, technology companies, and construction firms to use American resources to help make the products that are essential to our everyday lives.

As China continues to tighten global supplies of rare-earth elements, we should respond with an American mineral mining renaissance that will bring mining and manufacturing jobs back to America. The National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act is important to our jobs and to our economy. We must act now to cut the government red tape that is stopping American mineral production and furthering our dependence on foreign minerals.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today we are considering H.R. 761, the so-called National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act of 2013. Now, despite the bill's title, it has almost nothing to do with national strategic and critical minerals production. In fact, under the guise of promoting the development of minerals critical to the United States' national security, this legislation would reshape mining decisions on public lands for almost all minerals.

Mr. Chairman, the bill's classification of "critical minerals" is so broad that even sand and gravel and other such things can fall under its definition. Critical and strategic minerals? The Democratic amendments we will consider today will attempt to tailor this legislation to cover only minerals that are truly critical and strategic and will address the egregious provisions that would truncate important environmental review.

Make no mistake, this bill is a giveaway. It is free mining, no royalties, no protection of public interest, exemption from royalty payments, near exemption from environmental regulations, near exemption from legal enforcement of the protections. And it's unnecessary.

There is a real debate that we could be having about the mining laws in this country. It should start with reforming the mining law of 1872, which is as archaic as its name suggests—the mining law of 1872. We should be discussing abandoned mine reclamation. We should be discussing ensuring taxpayers a fair return on industrial development of our public lands.

Mr. Chairman, in the Natural Resources Committee markup on May 15 of this year where H.R. 761 was reported out on a nearly party line vote, the committee also reported two other bills on a bipartisan basis, two other bills that would lay the groundwork for developing critical and strategic mineral production. Those bills, H.R. 1063, the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Policy Act of 2013, and H.R. 981, the RARE Act, were unanimously reported out of the Natural Resources Committee and legitimately would be worth debating here in the House as part of any serious effort to improve our understanding of critical strategic mineral deposits and to aid in their development.

We reported out bills on a bipartisan basis that would do what this legislation purports to do. We could be discussing those bills. Instead, we're taking up legislation which is a giveaway. The legislation we could be dealing with would actually deal with strategic and critical minerals. Now, if the majority were to bring it to the floor, I'm sure it would pass in an overwhelming, bipartisan way and would likely be passed by the other body and signed into law. In fact, in the last Congress, the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Policy Act—not to be confused with the Production Act that we are considering today—was supported by the National Mining Association.

The president and CEO of the National Mining Association issued a statement when that bill passed out of committee last Congress, and he said: "The House Natural Resources Committee took important bipartisan action today to ensure U.S. manufacturers, technology innovators, and our military have a more stable supply of minerals vital to the products they produce and use." He went on to say that legislation, "will provide a valuable assessment of our current and future mineral demands and our ability to meet more of our needs through domestic minerals production."

We could be considering legislation like that.

We should be able to work in a bipartisan fashion when it comes to improving our supply of rare-earth minerals and other strategic minerals and ensuring that we are not dependent on China and other nations for their supply. But the majority seems to be not interested in that. Evidently, they don't want to work in a bipartisan fashion to produce legislation that all sides out there in the country, in industry, people who look after public lands and the environment could agree on. Instead, they're

moving this bill, H.R. 761, which has almost nothing to do with strategic minerals, is really about giveaways to the mining industry.

This bill would be a Trojan horse if it were to become law; however, it has no chance of becoming law. Maybe the American people should be grateful we won't pass this giveaway, that the American people—I say, those American people who don't stand to get rich by this mining giveaway.

But can the American people really feel good that we're wasting time and actually not looking after the critical and strategic minerals that American products, American defense depends on? Why are we playing these games? Why, I should say, are they playing these games with our legitimate needs to develop strategic minerals? We should be working in the kind of fashion that led to last year's bill.

The majority should shelf this giveaway to the mining industry and bring to the floor serious proposals that we could honestly debate as part of a legitimate bipartisan discussion regarding rare-earth policy and supply.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI), the author of this legislation.

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, having a real debate on this issue is something that I wholeheartedly support.

We probably ought to start with the facts. First of all, you've heard much about the overly broad definition. H.R. 761 deliberately contains a broad definition of strategic and critical minerals. Here are some of the reasons why:

In 2006, prior to the worldwide economic downturn, there was great concern over the future availability of platinum, group metals, and copper. At the time, projections in demand for copper indicated that by 2016, 30 large-scale copper deposits would have to come online to meet worldwide demand. At the time, there were not enough copper deposits in the permitting pipeline to make up for the projected downward curve.

And you have heard much about sand and gravel. Even sand and gravel and other construction mineral materials can be in short supply or not available, as the USGS discovered in 2009 during the great California shakeout. What they discovered during that was that, in its assessment of scope and damage and materials needed for construction in the event of a large-scale earthquake, USGS discovered there were not enough sand, gravel, and other construction materials available in the region to meet the affected area's reconstruction needs.

So when you talk about the ability to foretell the future and you say, well, we should just limit things to the i-um ending minerals, I say you probably ought to think about what it takes to get a bill through Congress to respond

to those things because it's less timely than the Federal permitting process.

Much has been made about getting rid of NEPA review. You know, when all else fails, read the bill. Take a look at page 7. And when you look at lines 4 through 9 there, these are not the words that you would be using if you were trying to get rid of the NEPA process. Starting up at page 6, line 24, it says, "The lead agency with responsibility for" permitting. Then you go down to page 7, line 5, it says, "if the procedural and substantive safeguards of the permitting process alone," they must find that those are there. Look at line 5, "if the procedural" are found. That is unlimited discretion in an executive branch agency.

So don't tell me that we're getting rid of NEPA, because the bill would have been written differently if we were trying to get rid of NEPA.

I want to also point your attention to the base of this is an infrastructure executive order from the current administration that talks about avoiding duplication of efforts. I also want to point out some words in there. It says, "infrastructure projects in sectors, including surface transportation"—oh, by the way, I think that has something to do with sand and gravel—"aviation"—runways I think have some of those elements that people don't think are critical—"ports, waterways, water resource projects, renewable energy generation, electricity transmission, broadband, pipelines"—hello, Keystone. See how good it's done them.

If this is an attempt to skirt environmental regulations, somebody probably should have written it differently. We didn't. It is simply not the truth.

And I want to talk about fair return on all this taxation stuff. In my State, which is 85 percent owned by the Federal Government, the Federal Government gives \$22 million a year to the rural counties in Nevada for PILT. And I know some of my colleagues from east of the Mississippi don't understand what that acronym means. It's payment in lieu of taxes, \$22 million. What this bill is really about is about jobs.

The final piece is this. This does not require anybody in the Federal permitting agencies to say, Yes, you can have your permit in 30 months. It requires an answer in 30 months. Nobody seeks to apply this to get a nice, crisp "no" in 30 months, which is why the language is in there, Mr. Chairman, that says, by the way, if both sides agree, you can have longer to process it.

Now, when you bounce that off the claims of 3½ and 5 years, under existing administration permitting timelines, asking them to set a 30-month timeline is not something which undoes environmental responsibility, rapes the landscape, and outdoes the taxpayers out of their normal revenues that are there.

Mr. HOLT. May I inquire of the time remaining, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from New Jersey has 23½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HOLT. I thank the Chair, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Well, I will repeat. This bill is a giveaway. It is free mining, no royalties. I referred to the archaic legislation that goes by the archaic name of the Mining Act of 1872 which excuses miners from royalty payments. That would apply here.

And as for excusing the miners from environmental regulations, the legislation says that the lead agency shall determine that a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of human environment has not occurred or is not occurring. In other words, the mining activities are excluded from, excused from, the triggering language of the Environmental Policy Act. No significant environmental policy review would be undertaken under the National Environmental Policy Act if the agency can say, Well, the State is doing something; the State is doing something, whatever that may be, however adequate that may turn out to be.

So I call that a relaxation, if not an exemption, of environmental protection. And I repeat, these mining activities do not allow for a fair return to the taxpayer, the owners of this land, for the use of this land.

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And under this, we could call anything at all strategic and critical. Yeah, sometimes the military might need to build a runway or extend a runway, but to say that the sand and gravel that's necessary to do that becomes strategic is a real perversion of the idea of strategic and critical.

So let's deal with those things that we need for aircraft engines and powerful magnets, lanthanum and neodymium and gadolinium and dysprosium and these other so-called rare-earth elements, some of which are actually not so rare, but they're dispersed and, therefore, hard to mine and hard to get adequate quantities of them and some of which are truly rare.

Let's deal with the legislation that makes those available for manufacturing needs, for national security needs, rather than having a catch-all mining definition that excuses any kind of mining from royalties and from environmental regulation.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH), a new member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Chairman, I commend the Congressman for recognizing the need to correct a major supply chain vulnerability in the United States, that of critical and strategic minerals.

Many of us in Congress only heard of the concept of strategic minerals after

we became lawmakers. Most of the time, we hear about exotic elements at the bottom of the periodic table like neodymium and europium, but the fact is that we are facing down potentially devastating supply disruptions for a much more familiar material, lead.

In my district, we know a lot about lead because my district produces more lead than any other district in the Nation. We rely on lead for everything from bullets, missiles, ships and tanks, to batteries for vehicles and energy storage, to TV and computer screens, to storing nuclear waste. Almost every one of us drives a car powered by a lead-acid battery.

It may be hard to believe that lead could be a strategic vulnerability for the United States because we have used it in so many products for over a century. Over the past generation, we have taken lead out of things like gasoline and paint to help protect human health.

But the fact is lead is still crucial as a critical material that we use safely in a vast number of American-manufactured technologies. There is only one primary lead producer remaining in the United States today, and that facility is scheduled to close at the end of 2013. And environmental regulations are making it more and more difficult for lead producers to extract and process economically.

Today, China produces three times the lead that the United States produces, and our global market share is shrinking. At the same time, global demand for lead is expected to grow by 5 to 6 percent a year, increasing prices and competition for our domestic resources.

American innovators are working hard to improve the efficiency of lead production and make sure as many lead-acid batteries as possible are recycled so their contents can be repurposed. But the U.S. simply cannot meet its national security needs and commercialize important new technologies without a more robust, secure supply.

I hope that H.R. 761 will open doors for lead production in the United States, and that any future legislative efforts on critical minerals will also account for lead supplies.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This legislation is fundamentally a solution in search of a problem. Now, according to analysis of data provided by the Bureau of Land Management for hardrock mines on public lands, for which there is complete data, the average time it takes to approve a plan of operation for a mine has actually decreased under the Obama administration. We do not need a relaxation of regulations in order to speed things up.

According to the BLM data, plans of operation for hardrock mines are being approved roughly 17 percent more quickly under the Obama administration than under the previous administration. Thank you, President Obama.

And despite the majority's claims, 82 percent of plans of operation for hardrock mines are approved within 3 years under the Obama administration.

Now, the mining company will say, oh, 3 years, that's so long. Well, according to the BLM "it takes, on average, 4 years to approve a mining plan of operation for a large mine, more than 1,000 acres on public lands."

Now, my colleagues on the other side have asked repeatedly what the problem is with their legislation that would truncate and eviscerate proper review of all mines on public lands if the majority of plans are approved within 3 years.

Well, it's because a little more than 15 percent of hardrock mines take more than 4 years to approve. For these mines, where mining companies may not have submitted a complete application, or may not have posted sufficient bond to ensure that the mine is cleaned up after the work, or where additional environmental review is required because the mine is large or potentially damaging to our environment and to public health, this bill would prevent proper review.

We're already approving hardrock mines more quickly under the current administration than under the previous administration. We should not be eviscerating proper review of virtually all mining operations on public lands, including sand and gravel, I repeat, as this Republican bill would do. We should certainly not be doing it under the pretense of developing critical and strategic minerals.

Now, the other side likes to cherry-pick. They cherry-pick one statistic out of a report, without having, apparently, read the rest of the report.

If you look at the full report by the international consulting firm Behre Dolbear, it states that "permitting delays are a global issue" and that "the business environment will likely favor firms that aggressively take a proactive stance concerning societal and environmental issues."

Plans under the current administration, under the current BLM, plans of operation for hardrock mines are being approved roughly 17 percent more quickly than previously.

They say that the United States is last, ranked last, in mining. No. What they fail to note is this very report says that the United States is one of the most attractive countries in the world for mining, sixth, to be precise, sixth most attractive. We are number six in the world when you take all factors into consideration and all countries into consideration.

Yet my colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to cherry-pick and say that the United States is so unfair to the mining interests that we have to give them a break, that we have to give away all of these mining resources on the public's lands, with no royalties and very few questions asked.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Missouri) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC AND CRITICAL MINERALS PRODUCTION ACT OF 2013

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI).

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, only in Washington would we be having a debate about whether 4 years is okay or 2½ years is okay when we're talking about a jobs bill. And only in Washington would we talk about cherry-picking when we're talking about the vast majority of the production that is sought for permitting, and the vast number of jobs that is created is not—I want to make this very clear so the record is clear—is not handled within 3 years.

Now, it may be true that it's less than the Bush administration, which is fine. Let's assume that it is.

But when you're talking about primarily issues that deal with Western lands whose States are at or near a majority of Federal ownership, and you want to talk about the middle class, and you want to talk about generating jobs, and you want to say, hey, by the way, you can take as long as you want; we don't know if you're going to have a job in that industry or not because there are no rules.

Only in Washington would we be defending no time limits whatsoever. To say 30 months is a bad idea, with language that says, if both sides agree, you can take longer, is not an unreasonable environmental or administrative stance.

Nobody wants a nice, crisp denial in 30 months; and by the way, if the application should be denied, then I presume that it will be denied.

But what we're seeing now, and you can find no legislative history for this anywhere in any of the applicable environmental regulations and statutes, of which all still apply, there is nothing that says, by the way, if nothing else works, just see if you can drag it out as long as possible and hope that that capital goes away. Because when you talk about permitting attractiveness, it's not what these folks are those folks say, it's where the capital goes. And the capital isn't going here.

And the strategic interest of having to go to China for your rare-earths or having to go to other countries to produce those is not apparent.