



Environmental Council of the States

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November 8, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries:

The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), the national, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of the states' top environmental leaders, writes to express our support for efforts to enact much-needed bipartisan legislation before the end of this year to help Good Samaritans clean up abandoned hardrock mines. We would appreciate your favorable consideration of H.R. 7779 – the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2024 – which was reported favorably by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on September 18, modeled closely on S. 2781, which passed the Senate this summer. Alternatively, we urge your support for inclusion of such legislation in this year's pending National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

ECOS [wrote](#) to leaders of the U.S. Senate on October 27, 2022 encouraging passage of S. 3571 – the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2022 – to spur environmental remediation and source water protection and provide incentives to states, tribes, nongovernmental organizations, and others involved in the cleanup of abandoned hardrock mines while retaining important safeguards. This year, the Senate passed S. 2781 – the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2024 – a bipartisan compromise bill that authorizes an important pilot program for progress on this longstanding problem.

ECOS members advocate for innovative environmental solutions, including the removal of potential permitting and liability barriers to responsible cleanups. Congress can facilitate broader efforts by adopting the pilot program in Senate and House legislation to spur greater environmental remediation and source water protection while accelerating mine reclamation and local economic development.

ECOS respectfully encourages you and your colleagues to pass this important, bipartisan compromise legislation, either in the NDAA or on a separate track, as soon as possible. We also recognize that the pilot projects may lead to additional insights and refinements. For example, the pilot program will likely underscore the need for increased coordination with state primacy

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programs on eligibility and scope of projects as sites are selected for the pilots and determinations of water quality progress are made. States, which are often best equipped with local knowledge of these sites and their impacts, will be essential partners in achieving and maintaining success.

ECOS appreciates your consideration of this bipartisan legislation to improve permitting and incentivize voluntary cleanup for environmental and economic progress, with greater partnerships among states, federal agencies, tribes, nonprofits, and the private sector. If you would like further information, please have your staff contact me at bgrumbles@ecos.org or (202) 266-4929.

Sincerely,



Ben Grumbles
Executive Director

Cc:

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Sam Graves, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure