



March 21, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

The National Mining Association (NMA) appreciates your introduction of the of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (S. 512) as a critical step to revitalize our nation's uranium industry. NMA is a national trade association that includes the producers of most of the nation's coal, metals, industrial and agricultural minerals; the manufacturers of mining and mineral processing machinery, equipment and supplies; and the engineering and consulting firms, financial institutions and other firms serving the mining industry. NMA's members include producers of domestic uranium as well as companies that have exploration projects or pending applications for development of domestic uranium mining projects.

The U.S. is almost completely reliant on foreign sources of uranium to power our nuclear reactors. According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, U.S. production of uranium (U3O8) only totaled 2.9 million pounds in 2016, 13 percent lower than the uranium produced in 2015 and the lowest annual U.S. production since 2005. S. 512 can help reverse these troubling trends and ensure we have a stable and affordable supply of domestic uranium to power our nuclear reactors, which provide one-fifth of the electricity in the United States.

S. 512 contains important reforms to modernize the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) fee structure for uranium recovery facilities and directs the NRC to examine the feasibility of extending the duration of uranium recovery licenses from 10 to 20 years, recognizing the low-risk nature of these projects. Furthermore, the legislation contains much needed provisions to bring greater transparency and accountability to the Department of Energy's (DOE) management of the federal excess uranium inventory. As you are well aware, DOE has a legal obligation to ensure uranium transfers will not have an adverse material impact on the domestic uranium mining, conversion, or enrichment industry. DOE has routinely failed to meet that obligation and continues to make uranium transfers without any meaningful public input. S. 512 will ensure stakeholders have a voice in the process and will place annual limits on the amount of DOE material that can enter the market, starting with the baseline of DOE's current level of transfers.

We applaud your leadership on this important legislation and that of your colleagues, Senators Sheldon Whitehouse, Jim Inhofe, Cory Booker, Mike Crapo, Deb Fischer, Shelly Moore Capito, Joe Manchin, Bob Casey, and Tammy Duckworth.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Sweeney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Sweeney
General Counsel
National Mining Association