

itorial/Opinion

editor

Mining reform

Dear Editor:

I want to bring your readers' attention to the situation regarding reform of the national mining law. The reform bill is currently in the Senate committee, chaired by New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman and includes Senator Pete Domenici, who is the ranking member. Late last year, the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 2262, which I believe will have dire economic consequences for many of New Mexico's mining communities.

Senators Bingaman and Domenici understand the dangers of HR 2262, a bill that would all but eliminate domestic mining and result in the import of minerals at high costs to Americans. That is why they are doing their best to negotiate a bill that offers feasible solutions such as providing a fair economic return to taxpayers for the use of federal lands. They are also proposing that old mines that were operated prior to the existence of reclamation laws are cleaned up.

I believe that Senators Bingaman and Domenici, along with the National Mining Association, are doing a commendable job of providing our community with the ideal

solutions to mining reform - ideas that won't damage our economy or create an ever greater dependence on foreign suppliers.

The U.S. Congress should work to strengthen American mining and provide a fair economic return to our taxpayers. An eight percent increase would simply be too high, and the risk of losing the mining industry is a risk we can't take.

I urge my fellow citizens to contact our Senators and let them know of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Elmer Chavez, Chairman
Cibola County Commission

JUST SO YOU KNOW

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