



Opinions Featured Letter

Mining is vital to our economy and our national security

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Dear Editor,

The Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act is before the Senate and if it passes in its current form, it will undoubtedly hurt Delta County.

Natural resources are abundant on the Western Slope and vital to our economy. This new bill will place a 4 percent royalty on existing mines and an 8 percent royalty on future operations. Almost everyone agrees that mining operations need to compensate the public at a fair and reasonable rate, but burdening this industry with the world's highest royalty rates will certainly push mining activities to foreign countries.

According to the United States Geological Survey, the U.S. reliance on foreign mineral imports has nearly doubled from 1996-2006. With rising demand from China, India and other rapidly developing countries the value of minerals is bound to continue to increase. It doesn't make sense to import minerals from foreign countries when we have vast mineral reserves just waiting to be tapped in our own backyard. But if the cost of doing business is more than the return companies receive, they will certainly invest elsewhere and take lots of high-paying jobs with them.

Senator Salazar should be concerned about the potential negative effects that this bill will have on his own constituents. A fair and reasonable compromise must be reached or the minerals that are critical to our economic vitality and national security will be controlled by foreign sources.

**Linda Sorenson
Delta**