January 16, 2024

The Honorable Tom Carper  The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  Ranking Member  
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee  Senate Environment & Public Works Committee  
United States Senate  United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510  Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: The Women’s Mining Coalition Offers its Strong Support for the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2024 (S.2781)

Dear Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Moore Capito:

The Women’s Mining Coalition (WMC) appreciates this opportunity to express our full support for the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2024, (S.2781). We are pleased that the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee (EPW) is holding this important business meeting and believe this important bill deserves the Committee’s enthusiastic support.

For nearly three decades, WMC, working in conjunction with the U.S. mining industry, has advocated for bipartisan legislation to enable Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) reclamation by addressing the Clean Water Act and Superfund liability issues that are a serious barrier to third-party Good Samaritan AML cleanup efforts. Nearly all AML sites with environmental challenges were created decades before the enactment of the country’s environmental protection statutory and regulatory framework. Consequently, finding a legislative solution to clean up these sites is imperative; S. 2781 is the necessary solution.

Based on WMC’s three decades of expertise with AML policy issues, we have long recognized the legal impediments to voluntary cleanup of AMLs, especially those sites where there are complex surface water and groundwater contamination issues due to contact with mine waste and/or seepage from old mine workings. There is widespread agreement among policymakers and independent researchers regarding the need to enact Good Samaritan liability relief to address the AML problem. Groups like the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council and the Western Governors’ Association have repeatedly urged Congress to enact legislation that eliminates the liability exposure that currently discourages parties that have no previous involvement with a mine from undertaking voluntary reclamation and remediation activities.

Since 2021, Congress has enacted two laws whose successful implementation relies, in part, on removing the barriers to Good Samaritan AML remediation. First, Section 40704 of the Infrastructure...
The Women’s Mining Coalition is a non-profit organization advocating for today’s modern mining industry, which is essential to our Nation.