

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 912

To require the Secretary of Energy to provide technology grants to strengthen domestic mining education, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 22, 2023

Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Energy to provide technology grants to strengthen domestic mining education, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Technology Grants to
5 Strengthen Domestic Mining Education Act of 2023” or
6 the “Mining Schools Act of 2023”.

7 **SEC. 2. TECHNOLOGY GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN DOMESTIC**
8 **MINING EDUCATION.**

9 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) BOARD.—The term “Board” means the
2 Mining Professional Development Advisory Board
3 established by subsection (d)(1).

4 (2) MINING INDUSTRY.—The term “mining in-
5 dustry” means the mining industry of the United
6 States, consisting of the search for, and extraction,
7 beneficiation, refining, smelting, and processing of,
8 naturally occurring metal and nonmetal minerals
9 from the earth.

10 (3) MINING PROFESSION.—The term “mining
11 profession” means the body of jobs directly relevant
12 to—

13 (A) the exploration, planning, execution,
14 and remediation of metal and nonmetal mining
15 sites; and

16 (B) the extraction, including the separa-
17 tion, refining, alloying, smelting, concentration,
18 and processing, of mineral ores.

19 (4) MINING SCHOOL.—The term “mining
20 school” means—

21 (A) a mining, metallurgical, geological, or
22 mineral engineering program accredited by the
23 Accreditation Board for Engineering and Tech-
24 nology, Inc., that is located at an institution of
25 higher education (as defined in section 101 of

1 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
2 1001)); or

3 (B) a geology or engineering program or
4 department that is located at a 4-year public in-
5 stitution of higher education (as so defined) lo-
6 cated in a State the gross domestic product of
7 which in 2021 was not less than
8 \$2,000,000,000 in the combined categories of
9 “Mining (except oil and gas)” and “Support ac-
10 tivities for mining”, according to the Bureau of
11 Economic Analysis.

12 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
13 the Secretary of Energy.

14 (b) DOMESTIC MINING EDUCATION STRENGTHENING
15 PROGRAM.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Sec-
16 retary of the Interior (acting through the Director of the
17 United States Geological Survey), shall—

18 (1) establish a grant program to strengthen do-
19 mestic mining education; and

20 (2) under the program established in paragraph
21 (1), award competitive grants to mining schools for
22 the purpose of recruiting and educating the next
23 generation of mining engineers and other qualified
24 professionals to meet the future energy and mineral
25 needs of the United States.

1 (c) GRANTS.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the grant
3 program established under subsection (b)(1), the
4 Secretary shall award not more than 10 grants each
5 year to mining schools.

6 (2) SELECTION REQUIREMENTS.—

7 (A) IN GENERAL.—To the maximum ex-
8 tent practicable, the Secretary shall select re-
9 cipients for grants under paragraph (1) to en-
10 sure geographic diversity among grant recipi-
11 ents to ensure that region-specific specialties
12 are developed for region-specific geology.

13 (B) TIMELINE.—The Secretary shall
14 award the grants under paragraph (1) by not
15 later than the later of—

16 (i) the date that is 180 days after the
17 start of the applicable fiscal year; and

18 (ii) the date that is 180 days after the
19 date on which the Act making full-year ap-
20 propriations for the Department of Energy
21 for the applicable fiscal year is enacted.

22 (3) RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARD.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—In selecting recipients
24 for grants under paragraph (1) and deter-
25 mining the amount of each grant, the Sec-

1 retary, to the maximum extent practicable, shall
2 take into consideration the recommendations of
3 the Board under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of
4 subsection (d)(3).

5 (B) SELECTION STATEMENT.—In selecting
6 recipients for grants under paragraph (1), the
7 Secretary shall—

8 (i) in response to a recommendation
9 from the Board, submit to the Board a
10 statement that describes—

11 (I) whether the Secretary accepts
12 or rejects, in whole or in part, the rec-
13 ommendation of the Board; and

14 (II) the justification and ration-
15 ale for any rejection, in whole or in
16 part, of the recommendation of the
17 Board; and

18 (ii) not later than 15 days after
19 awarding a grant for which the Board sub-
20 mitted a recommendation, publish the
21 statement submitted under clause (i) on
22 the Department of Energy website.

23 (4) USE OF FUNDS.—A mining school receiving
24 a grant under paragraph (1) shall use the grant
25 funds—

1 (A) to recruit students to the mining
2 school; and

3 (B) to enhance and support programs re-
4 lated to, as applicable—

5 (i) mining, mineral extraction effi-
6 ciency, and related processing technology;

7 (ii) emphasizing critical mineral and
8 rare earth element exploration, extraction,
9 and refining;

10 (iii) reclamation technology and prac-
11 tices for active mining operations;

12 (iv) the development of reprocessing
13 systems and technologies that facilitate
14 reclamation that fosters the recovery of re-
15 sources at abandoned mine sites;

16 (v) mineral extraction methods that
17 reduce environmental and human impacts;

18 (vi) technologies to extract, refine,
19 separate, smelt, or produce minerals, in-
20 cluding rare earth elements;

21 (vii) reducing dependence on foreign
22 energy and mineral supplies through in-
23 creased domestic critical mineral produc-
24 tion;

1 (viii) enhancing the competitiveness of
2 United States energy and mineral tech-
3 nology exports;

4 (ix) the extraction or processing of co-
5 inciding mineralization, including rare
6 earth elements, within coal, coal processing
7 byproduct, overburden, or coal residue;

8 (x) enhancing technologies and prac-
9 tices relating to mitigation of acid mine
10 drainage, reforestation, and revegetation in
11 the reclamation of land and water re-
12 sources adversely affected by mining;

13 (xi) enhancing exploration and charac-
14 terization of new or novel deposits, includ-
15 ing rare earth elements and critical min-
16 erals within phosphate rocks, uranium-
17 bearing deposits, and other nontraditional
18 sources;

19 (xii) meeting challenges of extreme
20 mining conditions, such as deeper deposits
21 or offshore or cold region mining; and

22 (xiii) mineral economics, including
23 analysis of supply chains, future mineral
24 needs, and unconventional mining re-
25 sources.

1 (d) MINING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ADVI-
2 SORY BOARD.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established an advi-
4 sory board, to be known as the “Mining Professional
5 Development Advisory Board”.

6 (2) COMPOSITION.—The Board shall be com-
7 posed of 6 members, to be appointed by the Sec-
8 retary not later than 180 days after the date of en-
9 actment of this Act, of whom—

10 (A) 3 shall be individuals who are actively
11 working in the mining profession and for the
12 mining industry; and

13 (B) 3 shall have experience in academia
14 implementing and operating professional skills
15 training and education programs in the mining
16 sector.

17 (3) DUTIES.—The Board shall—

18 (A) evaluate grant applications received
19 under subsection (c) and make recommenda-
20 tions to the Secretary for selection of grant re-
21 cipients under that subsection;

22 (B) propose the amount of the grant for
23 each applicant recommended to be selected
24 under subparagraph (A); and

1 (C) perform oversight to ensure that grant
 2 funds awarded under subsection (c) are used
 3 for the purposes described in paragraph (4) of
 4 that subsection.

5 (4) TERM.—A member of the Board shall serve
 6 for a term of 4 years.

7 (5) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Board—

8 (A) shall not affect the powers of the
 9 Board; and

10 (B) shall be filled in the same manner as
 11 the original appointment was made by not later
 12 than 180 days after the date on which the va-
 13 cancy occurs.

14 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
 15 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
 16 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2031.

17 **SEC. 3. REPEAL OF THE MINING AND MINERAL RESOURCES**
 18 **RESEARCH INSTITUTE ACT OF 1984.**

19 The Mining and Mineral Resources Research Insti-
 20 tute Act of 1984 (30 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.) is repealed.

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