

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3915

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 24, 2022

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 2022” or
6 the “Mining Schools Act of 2022”.

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)); and

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 2020 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 shall establish a program to
16 strengthen domestic mining education under which the
17 Secretary shall award competitive grants to mining schools
18 for the purpose of recruiting and educating the next gen-
19 eration of mining engineers and other qualified profes-
20 sionals to meet the future energy and mineral needs of
21 the United States.

22 (c) GRANTS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the grant
24 program established under subsection (b), the Sec-

retary shall award not more than 10 grants each year to mining schools.

(2) SELECTION REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall select recipients for grants under paragraph (1) to ensure geographic diversity among grant recipients to ensure that region-specific specialties are developed for region-specific geology.

(B) TIMELINE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award the first grants under paragraph (1) by not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

(ii) SUBSEQUENT GRANTS.—Each year following the first year in which grants are awarded pursuant to clause (i), the Secretary shall award subsequent grants by not later than 1 year after the date on which the grants were awarded the previous year.

(3) RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARD.—In selecting recipients for grants under paragraph (1) and determining the amount of each grant, the Secretary shall take into consideration the recommenda-

tions of the Board under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (d)(3).

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

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

(B) to enhance and support programs related to, as applicable—

(i) mining, mineral extraction efficiency, and related processing technology;

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

(iii) reclamation technology and practices for active mining operations;

(iv) the development of reprocessing systems and technologies that facilitate reclamation that fosters the recovery of resources at abandoned mine sites;

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

(vi) technologies to extract, refine, separate, melt, or produce minerals, including rare earth elements;

(vii) reducing dependence on foreign energy and mineral supplies through increased domestic critical mineral production;

(viii) enhancing the competitiveness of United States energy and mineral technology exports;

(ix) the extraction or processing of coinciding mineralization, including rare earth elements, within coal, coal processing byproduct, overburden, or coal residue;

(x) enhancing technologies and practices relating to mitigation of acid mine drainage, reforestation, and revegetation in the reclamation of land and water resources adversely affected by mining;

(xi) enhancing exploration and characterization of new or novel deposits, including rare earth elements and critical minerals within phosphate rocks, uranium-bearing deposits, and other nontraditional sources;

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

1 (xiii) mineral economics, including
 2 analysis of supply chains, future mineral
 3 needs, and unconventional mining re-
 4 sources.

5 (d) MINING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ADVI-
 6 SORY BOARD.—

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

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

14 (A) 3 shall be individuals who are actively
 15 working in the mining profession and for the
 16 mining industry; and

17 (B) 3 shall have experience in academia
 18 implementing and operating professional skills
 19 training and education programs in the mining
 20 sector.

21 (3) DUTIES.—The Board shall—

22 (A) evaluate grant applications received
 23 under subsection (c) and make recommenda-
 24 tions to the Secretary for selection of grant re-
 25 cipients under that subsection;

1 (B) propose the amount of the grant for
 2 each applicant recommended to be selected
 3 under subparagraph (A); and

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

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

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

11 (A) shall not affect the powers of the
 12 Board; and

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

17 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
 19 appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000
 20 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2030.

21 (2) REQUIREMENT.—At the end of each fiscal
 22 year, any amounts made available under paragraph
 23 (1) for that fiscal year that are not awarded as

- 1 grants under subsection (c) shall be returned to the
- 2 Treasury.

