

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 17, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

We write in strong support of the “Non-Energy Solid Leasable Mineral Royalty Rate Reduction” (RIN: 1004-AE58). We believe the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) should have the authority to determine a lower royalty rate for non-energy solid leasable minerals. This mineral group includes soda ash, a primary raw material in the manufacturing of glass, detergents, and other household products.

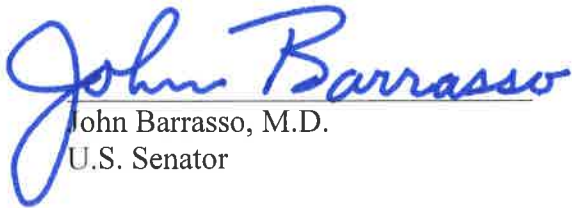
The purpose of this proposed rule is to address shortcomings with existing royalty rate reduction regulations for non-energy solid leasable minerals. Adding Section 3513.17 to the regulations, as proposed, will allow the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to make its own determination of need for an industry-wide royalty rate reduction for soda ash and other non-energy leasable solid minerals. Currently, the domestic soda ash industry faces severe and unprecedented global competition from synthetic soda ash manufactured in China. Final approval of this rule will strengthen U.S. production and export of natural soda ash, and will ensure that our domestic soda ash industry remains competitive and robust.

Congress has asked the BLM to reduce the royalty rate on soda ash in the Fiscal Year 2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill (Public Law 115-141), and in the Fiscal Year 2020 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act (Joint Explanatory Statement, Division D). As stated in these two pieces of legislation, it is the intent of Congress to reduce the royalty rate on soda ash to 2% for 10 years. This long-term rate reduction for soda ash will promote the development of this important mineral resource. In anticipation of this royalty reduction, three of the five U.S. soda ash producers announced plans for significant expansions and two new facilities. These reinvestments will total over \$6 billion over the next five years, and will add up to 500 new full time jobs once the construction is complete. These plans were announced shortly after Congress and DOI expressed their intent to reduce the royalty rate to 2% for 10 years.

As supporters of the domestic soda ash industry, we thank you for advancing this rulemaking. A lower federal royalty rate on soda ash will level the playing field in domestic and

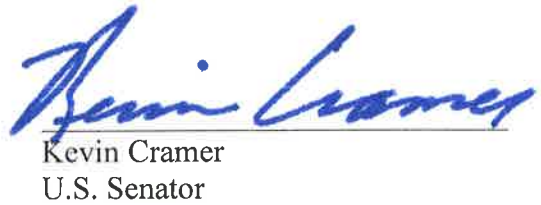
global markets, and will allow this vital U.S. industry to expand and add jobs throughout the supply chain. We appreciate your continued focus on this important rulemaking.

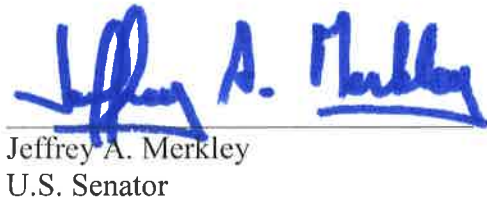
Sincerely,

  
John Barrasso, M.D.  
U.S. Senator

  
Ron Wyden  
U.S. Senator

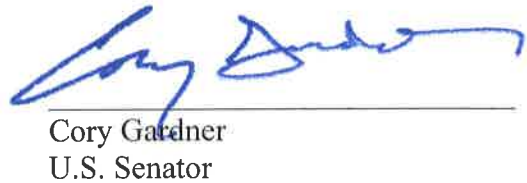
  
Michael B. Enzi  
U.S. Senator

  
Kevin Cramer  
U.S. Senator

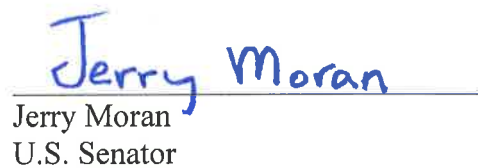
  
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
U.S. Senator

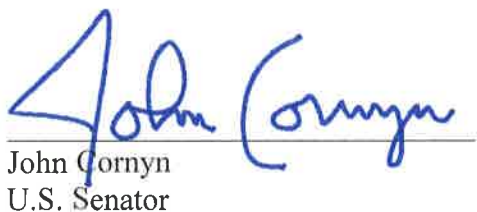
  
Debbie Stabenow  
U.S. Senator

  
Lamar Alexander  
U.S. Senator

  
Cory Gardner  
U.S. Senator

  
Pat Roberts  
U.S. Senator

  
Jerry Moran  
U.S. Senator

  
John Cornyn  
U.S. Senator



Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader



Liz Cheney  
U.S. Representative



Paul Cook  
U.S. Representative



Kurt Schrader  
U.S. Representative



Paul A. Gosar  
U.S. Representative



Doug LaMalfa  
U.S. Representative



Rick W. Allen  
U.S. Representative



Scott R. Tipton  
U.S. Representative



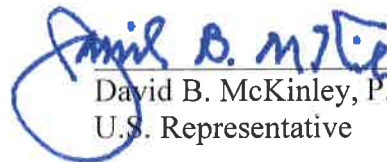
David P. Roe, M.D.  
U.S. Representative



Chris Stewart  
U.S. Representative



Jim Jordan  
U.S. Representative



David B. McKinley, P.E.  
U.S. Representative



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Brett Guthrie  
U.S. Representative



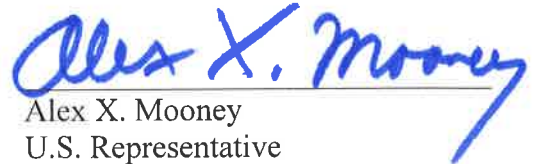
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H. Morgan Griffith  
U.S. Representative



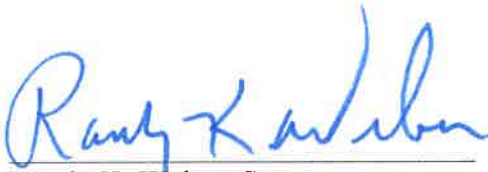
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Rob Bishop  
U.S. Representative



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Alex X. Mooney  
U.S. Representative



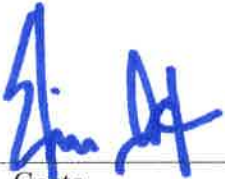
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Randy K. Weber, Sr.  
U.S. Representative



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Bill Johnson  
U.S. Representative



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Jim Costa  
U.S. Representative