



March 13, 2025

Chairman Patten and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 3017 which recognizes December 6th as "Miner's Day." North Dakota's lignite industry is a cornerstone of our state's economy, contributing over \$5.5 billion in total business activity and supporting 12,000 high-paying jobs. The energy produced from lignite provides 55% of the state's electricity and ensures some of the lowest residential power rates in the nation. This resolution rightfully acknowledges the miners who make this possible, as well as the industry's contributions to energy security, economic growth, and technological advancements.

Beyond traditional power generation, North Dakota's lignite industry is leading in innovation, advancing research and development in carbon capture and the extraction of critical minerals and rare earth elements—resources essential for national security and modern technology. With an 800-year supply of lignite reserves, our state has the potential to not only maintain energy independence but also expand its role in emerging markets. Additionally, North Dakota's commitment to environmental responsibility sets us apart, as we consistently meet or exceed federal air quality standards and reclaim mined lands to a condition equal to or better than their original state. Recognizing the hard work and dedication of coal miners through this resolution underscores their critical role in keeping our energy system affordable, reliable, and sustainable.

However, ongoing federal regulations continue to place undue burdens on coal-based energy production, threatening its future viability. While renewable energy sources have received subsidies for decades, lignite remains at a competitive disadvantage due to policies that discourage investment in new coal technologies. This resolution serves as an important statement that North Dakota stands with its coal miners and supports a balanced energy approach that values all sources of reliable power.

The Lignite Energy Council fully supports HCR 3017 and urges the committee to pass this resolution in recognition of the essential contributions of our coal workforce and industry to the state and the region.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jonathan Fortner
VP of Government Relations
Lignite Energy Council