



North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Anna Novak

District 33
1139 Elbowoods Drive
Hazen, ND 58545-4923
anovak@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Energy and Natural Resources (Vice Chair)

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Thank You, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee-

For the record, my name is Anna Novak, Representative for district 33, which is otherwise known as "Coal Country".

I am here today to offer support for hb1459. This revolutionary piece of legislation is very important to my district. I represent 3400 coal miners, 7300 coal plant workers and 1100 employees that focus on the transmission and distribution of electricity. This bill offers a value-add for coal.

Since Covid, we have realized how supply chain disruptions can have long-lasting impacts and affect nearly everything in our technological driven world. Over 70% of critical metals and rare earth elements we use in America are mined and processed in China. And as you likely know, China doesn't adhere to the child and slave labor laws enforced in other countries. They also have shown that they don't care much about environment. America can do it better. And North Dakota is the perfect place to begin this up and coming industry. We have an incredibly business-friendly tax structure, already permitted coal mines, primacy and the hardest working workforce in the country.

Since President Trump took office a little over two months ago, he has made it very clear that he desires to secure a domestic source of critical metals and rare earth elements. It's a matter of national security at this point.

With our legislature meeting only every other year, it is incredibly important that we pass this piece of legislation. No other state currently has the regulatory framework in place for this developing industry...but they are working on it. North Dakota waiting another two years will most certainly mean that we will have lost our opportunity to be first in line, which is where we are right now. I recognize there are likely going to be aspects of this legislation that need to be fine-tuned once the industry gets going because this is new...and we don't know what we're dealing with until we get the industry going. But the time to act is now.

Please support hb1459 to give a lifeline to the coal industry and offer our landowners the opportunity to take part in this exciting opportunity, which provides them the financial opportunities within their existing coal leases as well as additional revenue from the profits of the critical minerals and rare earth industry.

This concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. With that, I'll stand for any questions. Thank you.