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Home > House Committee holds underground hearing on mining workforce, education

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On December 14, the House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a field hearing at an unconventional location, the underground classroom of the Edgar Mine at the Colorado School of Mines Experimental Mine in Idaho Springs, Colorado. The hearing focused on the need for increased federal investments in mining and mining engineering education to sustain a skilled and competitive workforce.

According to a white paper from the committee, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement is already required to boost mining research; however, only a small percentage of funds go to the engineering programs, which have fallen from 25 in 1982 to 14 in 2007. In order to combat this recent decline, Reps. Cresent Hardy (R-NV) and Ed Perlmutter (D-CO) introduced the Mining Schools Enhancement Act (H.R. 3734), which would ensure more robust funding for mining and mining engineering schools. The proponents of the bill hope boosting mining education will not only help the industry, but also make extraction techniques cleaner and safer.

Sources: Congress.gov, E&E News, House Natural Resources Committee
