

Opening Statement of Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI)  
Field Hearing  
“Protecting Workers and Powering America: The Future of Mining”  
May 8, 2026

(As prepared for delivery)

I would like to thank Vincennes University for hosting today’s hearing. It is great to be at an institution that is educating tomorrow’s leaders in the fields of firefighting, manufacturing, workplace safety, and mining.

Today’s hearing will examine the U.S. mining industry and ways we can improve the industry for both miners and mine operators. Under the Trump administration and Republican leadership in Congress, there is opportunity for mining to grow and continue delivering for communities like this one.

America’s mining industry is at a turning point. Last year, President Trump issued three executive orders aimed at strengthening domestic mining production. These were critical steps to ensure energy independence for the nation.

The Department of Labor and this Committee are also taking steps to remove burdensome policies and create a regulatory landscape that allows mining operations to grow.

Acting on these executive orders, the Department of Energy recently announced nearly \$100 million in funding as part of its Mine of the Future initiative, with \$80 million going toward the development and commercialization of advanced mining technology. This initiative recognizes the innovative approaches being taken in the mining industry, where some of the most advanced technology is being used to increase production efficiency and reduce worker exposure and risk.

Last July, members of this Committee sent a letter to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) requesting that it revise the overly burdensome rule on respirable crystalline silica issued by the Biden-Harris administration in 2024. The mining industry depends on small and mid-sized operators, and several provisions in this final rule placed costly obligations on these businesses, which would likely cause them to close their doors.

But the work does not stop there. We must ensure worker protections keep pace. For example, in July 2025 MSHA created the Compliance Assistance in Safety and Health, or CASH, program to support the anticipated surge in mining productivity following President Trump's executive orders. MSHA also continues to award millions of dollars in grants to support mine safety and health training across the United States.

These investments in safety and health have paid off. In 2025, the mining industry experienced its lowest total injury rate in history. While there has been outstanding progress in keeping our workers safe, there is still more work to do.

Collaboration between government and the private sector leads to safer workplaces, an educated workforce, and a stronger mining industry.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about ways to unleash the mining industry's potential in a way that protects miners and benefits the communities in which they live and work.