

ALCEE L. HASTINGS  
23RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
FLORIDA

RULES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE  
AND BUDGET PROCESS  
RANKING MEMBER

UNITED STATES  
HELSINKI COMMISSION  
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

FLORIDA DELEGATION  
DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN  
SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0923**

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

- 2353 RAYBURN BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0923  
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-1313  
FAX: (202) 225-1171
- 2701 W. OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD  
SUITE 200  
FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33311  
TELEPHONE: (954) 733-2800  
FAX: (954) 735-9444
- DELRAY BEACH CITY HALL  
100 NW 1ST AVENUE  
DELRAY BEACH, FL 33444  
TELEPHONE: (561) 243-7042  
FAX: (561) 243-7327

[www.alceehastings.house.gov](http://www.alceehastings.house.gov)

**Statement of the Honorable Alcee L. Hastings**  
**On the Introduction of Amendment #10 to H.R. 4402**  
July 10, 2012

Mr. Chairman, despite the name of this bill, the underlying legislation has little to do with securing a sufficient supply of rare earth minerals for our country.

Rather, it is another Republican giveaway to large, profitable companies that do not need Congressional action to pad their bottom lines.

In fact, today's bill is so broadly drafted that it is not just rare earth mines that will no longer have to adhere to our federal environmental laws, but virtually any mine on public land anywhere, including silver, uranium and coal mines.

Mining operations have severe and permanent consequences for the land and residents living nearby.

In fact, 75 percent of existing mines end up polluting the ground water despite the designed mitigation plans.

The need for a complete and thorough review of the environmental impact BEFORE approval is therefore absolutely necessary.

What's more, Mr. Chairman, is that this bill's underlying intent of loosening up the permitting process is not even necessary. Mining is already the priority use for most public lands, which makes it virtually impossible to regulate and control.

Mining on public lands is also already incredibly cheap. These companies pay little rent to the American taxpayer for the use of public land.

Moreover, under the Obama administration, 82 percent of plans are approved within three years, with an average of four years for the largest mines located on public lands.

Any delays in permit approval usually stem from an incomplete application or problems that arise during review which were not anticipated and require supplemental information.

By giving the lead agency the option to extend the time period for review in the event of new information, my amendment makes sure agencies can get the job done right while still adhering to a predictable schedule.

Prioritizing speed over accuracy, as this bill does, guarantees that mining companies are able to drill additional mines at a faster rate with less consideration for the broader impact of those mines.

My amendment is necessary to give agencies the time they need to make sure that this bill WILL NOT compromise environmental protections that keep our drinking water safe, our soil nourishing and non-toxic, and our air clean enough to breathe.