



JEWELERS OF AMERICA, INC.

November 14, 2005

The Honorable Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

VIA Facsimile: (202) 226-1996

RE: Mining Provisions in the House Reconciliation Bill

Dear Speaker Hastert,

On behalf of Jewelers of America (JA), I am writing to register our strong opposition to a provision within the House Budget Reconciliation bill (H.R. 4241) that would result in a massive public land giveaway to corporations and private interests. We urge that this section ("Miscellaneous Amendments Relating to Mining") be stripped from the bill.

JA supports meaningful reform to the clearly outdated Mining Act of 1872. Our 11,000 member stores, spread throughout the United States, firmly believe that mining reforms should include strict environmental regulations that adequately protect our nation's watersheds, forests and wildlife and should institute fair market value fees for mining claims on Federal lands. The mining provisions that were quietly slipped into H.R. 4241 accomplish neither of these objectives. Indeed, they would be a major step backward.

Any reforms to the mining laws must be done in the "light of day" with full consideration by the committees of jurisdiction and with ample opportunity for the public to examine and comment on the legislation. Disguising major changes in our environmental laws as "miscellaneous" and merely a "revenue raiser" simply does not serve the public interest. These lands have been held in trust for the public and should be treated as such.

Again, I urge you to remove the mining provisions from the bill. If these provisions should remain in tact, I am certain that JA members throughout the country will engage in a grassroots effort to oppose the overall Budget Reconciliation bill.

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Runci
President/CEO

cc. The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader [Fax: (202) 225-4188]