

Balancing Economic And Environment Needs



By Jack N. Gerard

(NAPSA)—There is an important fundamental issue raised by the current administration's review of President Clinton's "midnight regulations": the need to sensibly balance our economic, environmental and natural resource development objectives. When looked at from this perspective, the true intent of the administration's actions becomes clearer, and the contrast with previous policies more stark. In the end, we are left with this basic question: Which approach offers the best chance for achieving success in all of these important areas—the economy, environment, energy utilization, and the supply of raw materials that provide the foundation for our way of life?

To answer this question, let's look—not at perceptions—but at what the Bush administration actually did in some of these major policy areas during its first few weeks in office, and why they felt such action was necessary.

Consider the "Section 3809"

rules, which govern hardrock mining on public lands. The potential negative impacts of these proposals on minerals mining, jobs and ultimately, the economy, were not just matters of hyperbole, but of thoughtful analysis and study, and well-known to industry proponents and opponents alike.

Recognizing that more than one national objective was affected by these rules, the Bush Administration's Bureau of Land Management sensibly decided to review them and seek additional public comment on the potential effect in all areas.

In a similar way, administration decisions to not regulate carbon dioxide as a pollutant, and to reject the economically devastating Kyoto Protocol, were clearly choices of balance. A balanced approach to these and other issues offers the best opportunity to both protect the environment and preserve economic growth.

Mr. Gerard is President of the National Mining Association.