HB 2737 -- MINING

SPONSOR: Woods

This bill modifies the laws relating to mining. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Increases the fine for a party owning, controlling , or working a mining shaft refusing to allow a county surveyor to enter the shaft from not to exceed $300, to not to exceed $1,000;

(2) Adds cobalt, rare earth elements and silica sand to minerals requiring a person, company, or corporation to have obtained an indemnity bond before sinking a shaft, mine, tunnel, excavate or drift within a city, town, or village with 1,000 inhabitants or more and increases the penalty for not obtaining the bond from $500 to $1,000 and no less than six months in jail to no less than one year;

(3) Requires the Department of Natural Resources to provide certain notice for all permits to mine minerals;

(4) Adds aluminum to the definition of "metallic minerals" for the purposes of the Metallic Minerals Waste Management Act;

(5) Modifies the definition of "mineral", adds the definition of a "Rare earth element", and the term "wildlife refuges" for the purposes of the Land Reclamation Act;

(6) Specifies that certain records relating to complaints filed related to an alleged violation of permitting requirements under the Land Reclamation Act are to be made available by request under the Missouri Sunshine Law, with personally identifiable information of the complainant redacted. Currently, any such records are considered confidential;

(7) Prohibits, beginning August 28, 2026, any person from engaging in or carrying out a mining operation for minerals without first obtaining a permit. Anyone currently engaging in or carrying out a mining operation must apply for a permit before March 1, 2026;

(8) Requires the Department, before October 1, 2026, to develop model standards and criteria, as specified in the bill, for mining, processing, and transporting minerals;

(9) Authorizes a political subdivision to enact or extend a local ordinance that prohibits new or expanding mining operations;

(10) Requires permit holders to submit a report to the Department annually containing specified information;

(11) Repeals a provision of law prohibiting the Department from issuing a permit for a mine within 1,000 feet of certain schools;

(12) Prohibits excavation or mining of any mineral or refining, manufacturing or recycling specified minerals within one mile of any wildlife refuge, surface water, State Conservation Area, State park, Federal park, residence, or school;

(13) Specifies that the Department must require proof of public notice upon accepting an application for a new or expanding mining permit, and the Department must accept written public comments for 60 days after receipt of the application;

(14) Requires a mining permit applicant to submit a mine plan, which includes information as specified in the bill, with the permit application;

(15) Within one week of submission of a permit application, the proposed operator must publish a notice of the application in a qualified newspaper daily for four weeks or post it on the official website of the county where the land is located. The operator must also send notice of the permit application to certain other entities;

(16) Repeals the provision of laws stating that if the Department does not respond to a permit application within 45 calendar days, the application is deemed complete;

(17) Increases the time in which a person may request a public meeting from 15 days to 30 days from the date of notice;

(18) Lowers the fine amount for engaging in the mining of minerals without previously securing a permit to do so from no less than $50 nor more than $1,000, to no less than $5,000 nor more than $10,000;

(19) Requires, before October 1, 2027, the Department to establish and maintain a database of political subdivision ordinances and permits that have been approved for the regulation of mining projects;

(20) Requires a mining permit applicant for a project involving silica sand to, beginning August 28, 2027, prepare and submit to the Department an environmental assessment worksheet if the project excavates 20 or more acres of land to a depth of 10 feet or more or is designed to store more than 7,500 tons or has an annual throughput of more than 200,000 tons of silica sand;

(21) Requires a mining permit applicant for a project involving cobalt or rare earth minerals to, beginning August 28, 2027, prepare and submit to the Department an environmental assessment worksheet;

(22) Requires the Department to develop a separate worksheet for each of the minerals and specifies the information that must be included in each worksheet;

(23) Requires the Department to adopt specified rules pertaining to certain mining operations and also regulations pertaining to reclamation of such mines; and

(24) Requires, before January 1, 2027, the Department of Health and Senior Services to adopt an air quality health-based value for certain minerals.

This bill is similar to HB 704 (2025).