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(Wyo.)- Wyoming Republicans Push To Restore Mineral Funds



By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 05/14/2013 03:59 PM

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) - A Wyoming congresswoman is sponsoring legislation that would restore \$110 million in federal mineral royalty payments to 35 states.

The bill introduced Tuesday by Republican Rep. Cynthia Lummis would allow states to directly collect their share of royalty payments from companies that produce minerals from federal lands. Republican Sen. Mike Enzi, of Wyoming, says he's sponsoring similar legislation in the Senate.

Wyoming is the nation's largest coal-producing state and stands to lose more than \$50 million in this year's cuts. New Mexico would lose \$26 million.

Also Tuesday, the Western Governors' Association wrote to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack opposing federal cuts to the mineral royalty program and to another federal program that supports rural schools.

Federal officials say the federal budget reduction law gives them no choice but to cut the programs.