

Threat of mining law reform sets off land rush

Companies scramble for federal land patents in Wyo

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CASPER — With legislation looming which may eliminate the ability of companies to obtain federal land for as little as \$2.50 per acre, the number of mining patent applications has skyrocketed in Wyoming in the first seven months of 1993.

Two industries, bentonite and uranium, are responsible for the

increase in applications to patent, or purchase, mining claims in Wyoming this year. Spokesmen for both say there are a number of reasons for the skyrocketing number of applications, including recent purchases of claims and a wrapping up of technical surveys.

But pending legislation which, among other things, might eliminate the patent system entirely is of paramount concern to the entire hardrock mining industry, com-

pany spokesmen said.

Conversely, another proposal in Congress would allow the system to continue.

The final reform bill is likely to be a compromise, and the industry feels that one possible compromise would allow existing patent applications to continue under the old system.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, meanwhile, opposes the

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Government May Increase Price and Complicate Procedure for Mining Claims

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