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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NR#2015-09

May 21, 2015

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CALIFORNIA RANKS EIGHTH IN U.S. IN 2013 NON-FUEL MINERAL PRODUCTION

State Produced \$3.3B, Despite Dip in Gold, According to Calif. Geological Survey

Note: The report, including a pie chart of mineral commodities, is available at

http://www.consrv.ca.gov/cgs/geologic_resources/mineral_production/Pages/Index.aspx

SACRAMENTO – California’s non-fuel mineral production ranked eighth in the U.S. in 2013 at about \$3.3 billion, according to a new California Geological Survey (CGS) report.

“The dollar value was about the same as in 2012 despite a significant decline in gold production and value,” noted California’s State Geologist, Dr. John Parrish, who heads CGS.

California produced more than two dozen different non-fuel mineral commodities and was the only U.S. producer of boron compounds and rare earth minerals. It ranked second behind Texas in the production of construction sand and gravel and portland cement. The state ranked sixth among the 10 states that reported gold production for the year.

Based on the U.S. Geological Survey’s (USGS) preliminary data for 2013, California ranked behind Utah, Alaska, Texas, Florida, Minnesota, Arizona and Nevada in the value of all non-fuel mineral production, accounting for approximately 4.2 percent of the nation’s total.

Construction grade sand and gravel was California’s leading mineral commodity in terms of dollar value at \$911 million for 93.9 million tons produced compared to the revised 2012 totals of \$843 million for 85.0 million tons produced. This represents a continuing upward trend in production since 2011.

Portland cement ranked second in value at \$691 million for 10.1 million tons produced, also an increase in value and tonnage over 2012. Boron minerals ranked third in value; because there are only two producers of boron minerals in the state, specific production values are withheld to protect proprietary company information.

“None of these materials are as well known to most people as gold or iron, but all have significant value in

the modern economy,” said John Clinkenbeard, head of CGS’ Minerals Program. “The building and paving industries consume large quantities of construction materials. Those materials are essential both to maintain the existing infrastructure and to provide for new construction. Rare earth minerals are critical to many high-tech products, such as cell phones. Boron is used in many household products and pharmaceuticals.”

Construction materials, including aggregate (sand and gravel and crushed stone) and cement, accounted for about 58 percent of the value of California’s annual non-fuel mineral production in 2013. The report notes that several California counties – San Mateo, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Solano, Napa, Los Angeles and Fresno – permitted, or were in the process of permitting, new quarries or the expansion of existing quarries in 2013 to ensure local supplies of construction materials for the near future.

Gold accounted for 99 percent of California’s metal production in 2013 although the amount and value was down as compared to 2012. Gold production decreased to 146,500 ounces in 2013, from a revised 2012 production of 187,390 ounces. The value of gold production in the state decreased to \$207.2 million from a revised \$314.4 million in 2012, a 34.1 percent decrease in value.

The state’s largest gold producer was the New Gold Inc., Mesquite gold mine in Imperial County at approximately 107,000 ounces for the year. The other major producer of gold in California was the Atna Resources Ltd., Briggs Mine in Inyo County, which produced about 31,700 ounces in 2013. In addition to those two lode mines, placer gold was produced from one active dredge and as a byproduct from many sand and gravel mines in the northern and central parts of the state.

There were about 700 active mines in California producing non-fuel minerals during the year. About 5,300 people were employed at those mines and their processing facilities, according to the California Employment Development Department.

CGS’s Mineral Land Classification Project, a mandate of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act, provides local lead agencies with mineral resource maps and reports to assist them in land-use planning and mineral resource conservation. CGS has completed mineral resource studies in about one-third of the state.

More information about CGS and other California Department of Conservation programs is available at www.conservation.ca.gov.

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