

NEW COMPOSITION

Change for Change

Legislation allows leeway in adjusting the alloys of silver American Eagles and annual proof sets.

➤ ON DECEMBER 4, 2015, President Barack Obama signed H.R. 1698 into law. Also known as The Bullion and Collectible Coin Production and Efficiency and Cost Savings Act, the legislation allows the U.S. Department of the Treasury and U.S. Mint officials to change the 90-percent-silver/10-percent-copper alloy used for commemorative silver dollars, as well as the specimens featured in annual silver proof sets.

Under H.R. 1698, the language “90 percent silver 10 percent copper,” which has been part of the United States code, has now been replaced with “not less than 90 percent silver.” Rather than dictating an exact specification of

what the alloy should be, the wording allows the U.S. Mint leeway in adjusting the content of the coins with the Secretary of the Treasury’s approval. The legislation is one of several freestanding bills incorporated into the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (also known as the “FAST Act”).

The bill also affects the production of special American Eagle silver dollars this year. The mandate requires that the edges of proof and uncirculated American Eagles bearing the “W” mintmark be smooth and inscribed with a special designation to mark the coins’ 30th anniversary, although the law does not specify how the inscription should read.



▲ New legislation might affect the composition of popular U.S. Mint products, such as the silver American Eagle bullion coin (top) and the America the Beautiful silver proof set (bottom).

PHOTOS: UNITED STATES MINT