



American Critical Minerals Association

September 26, 2023

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jefferies
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker McCarthy, Leader McConnell and Leader Jefferies,

We write today to applaud the inclusion of numerous beneficial provisions regarding critical minerals in the FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act currently being considered by Congress, in addition to the Committee-passed FY2024 Defense and Energy & Water Appropriations Acts this year. These policies will ensure meaningful progress toward our national goal of establishing an independent and sustainable supply chain for critical minerals.

The American Critical Minerals Association (ACMA) is an industry association that welcomes members from across the critical mineral supply chain, including raw material producers, processors, recyclers, suppliers, manufacturers, and end users, as well as academic institutions and industry allies. ACMA is particularly focused on advancing the domestic critical mineral processing and recycling sectors in a sustainable and responsible manner and for the benefit of our nation's economy and security.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) reports that the US imported more than 50 percent of 47 mineral commodities in 2021, including 100 percent of our supply of 17 minerals.

Whether for batteries, defense applications, clean transportation and renewable energy, medical devices, semiconductor production, or other manufacturing needs, American industry is increasingly aware of the need for a critical minerals supply that is secure, sustainable and free from the geopolitical agenda of foreign nations who do not share our values nor interests. ACMA believes that United States industrial policy must keep pace with this goal.

We encourage Congress to continue to work with industry and other stakeholders on key policy solutions including streamlined permitting reform, continued collaboration with allies and longstanding free trade partners, and reliable meaningful funding to support research and development into critical minerals production and recycling technologies. We applaud the inclusion of policies supporting the domestic critical minerals supply chain including, but not limited to, the provisions described below.

[FY24 National Defense Authorization Act & FY24 Defense Appropriations Acts](#)

- Establishing authority for multiyear procurement by the Department of Defense (DOD) for rare earth elements
- Supporting the exploration and possible addition of new minerals to the National Defense Stockpile
- Encouraging the Secretary of Defense to consider partnerships that support biological methods for extracting and processing critical minerals, including rare earth elements
- Recognizing the importance of
 - Growing US production of aluminum-scandium alloy
 - Addressing vulnerabilities associated with our domestic supply of graphite and whether partnerships in North America could be leveraged to reduce this vulnerability
 - Sourcing minerals in innovative ways including the potential for exploration of and partnerships around responsible seabed mining of polymetallic nodules
 - Domestic partnerships and investments in studies focused on the use of biology to “develop scalable and economically viable” methods of extracting and processing rare earth elements and critical minerals
 - Securing a supply of magnesium metal for our national defense systems
 - Supporting carbon nanotube technology to ensure DOD mission critical systems are leveraging predictable thermal interface solutions enabled with these technologies
- Establishing a university-affiliated research center for critical minerals
- Requiring the DOD to establish a strategy for its own critical minerals supply, prioritizing domestic production and processing in an effort to achieve independence from covered countries by 2035
- Establishing policies and procedures to identify end-of-life (EOL) equipment that contains rare earth elements and/or other critical materials, as well as policies and procedures that would allow for their recovery and reuse
- Encouraging further use of the Defense Production Act to grow domestic capabilities of critical materials necessary for defense requirements, especially niobium, tantalum and scandium
- Recognizing the Defense Logistics Agency’s (DLA) prioritization of the domestic production of graphite
- Encouraging the DLA to explore opportunities for partnerships to advance battery recycling

Fiscal Year 24 Energy & Water Development, as passed by the House Committee on Appropriations

- Funding and direction for R&D into advanced separation technologies for the extraction and recovery of rare earth elements and other minerals from coal and coal byproducts
- Directing the Department of Energy (DOE) to demonstrate support for projects that will:
 - Advance the domestic supply chain for permanent rare earth magnets in defense applications and energy technologies, as well as other commercial products
 - Enable domestic recycling of critical minerals at high qualities and grades
 - Include “innovative, high performing, and flexible refining technologies beyond hydro- and pyro-metallurgical separation for separating and purifying critical minerals and rare earth elements” domestically
 - Establish a competitive solicitation for RD&D projects that combine recycling technologies and rare earth element separation technologies
 - Direct the Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains (MESCC) to support manufacturing capacity by funding projects in support of onshoring the critical minerals supply chain
 - Developing advanced battery solicitations focused on battery types including non-lithium-ion battery chemistries

Fiscal Year 24 Energy & Water Development, as passed by the Senate Committee on Appropriations

- Funding of \$345,230,00 for the crosscutting Critical Minerals Initiative to advance domestic critical mining, production, processing, recycling and manufacturing
- Encouraging the Department to include alternative advanced battery technologies in its efforts to advance long-duration grid-scale energy storage and electric vehicles
- Including \$455,000,00 for Vehicle Technologies including \$250,000,000 for battery and electrification technologies with direction to work to expand domestic manufacturing opportunities for domestic battery production
- Encouraging the Department, as it works to achieve commercially viable grid-scale battery storage, to consider advanced battery charge control optimization technologies that will improve battery cycle life and promote critical mineral and material sustainability
- Encouraging the Department to support projects that will enable these critical minerals to remain within the United States to be recycled and refined back to high-purity qualities and grades
- Continuing the Carbon Ore, Rare Earths, and Critical Minerals [Core-CM] including a joint project with the Department of Commerce and the USGS to enhance the security of the rare earth element supply chain
- Directing the Energy Information Administration to enter into a MOU with the USGS to complete detailed plans for modeling and forecasting of energy technologies that use minerals or that could be designated as critical minerals within FY24
- Including congressionally directed spending for the Desert Research Institute for the purposes of lithium resource mapping and the WV Public Energy Authority for hydrogen and critical mineral extraction from fossil fuels

We appreciate your leadership and strongly urge you to take up and pass the FY24 NDAA and FY 2024 appropriations bills to ensure that the advancements we are making toward an independent critical minerals supply chain are uninterrupted and the efforts of the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the USGS and other federal agencies continue to grow in a manner that support our national security and domestic manufacturing base. The challenges ahead to securing a reliable and sustainable supply chain for the US economy and our national defense systems are substantial but meeting those challenges is imperative. There is no time to waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The American Critical Minerals Association

cc:

Senator Patty Murray

Senator Susan Collins

Representative Kay Granger

Representative Rosa DeLauro

Senator Jack Reed

Senator Roger Wicker

Representative Mike Rogers

Representative Adam Smith