American Critical Minerals Association

November 30, 2023

Representative Frank Lucas
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space & Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space & Technology
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas, Ranking Member Lofgren, and Members of the Committee,

As you convene today's hearing on "The Role of Federal Research in Establishing a Robust U.S. Supply Chain of Critical Minerals and Materials," the American Critical Minerals Association (ACMA) applauds your leadership in elevating the importance of research and development in the advancement of an independent and secure US critical minerals supply chain. Public and private investment in research and development must advance solutions to ensure the United States is moving strategically and expeditiously toward countering Chinese control of the global critical mineral supply chain.

ACMA is an industry association that welcomes members from across the critical minerals supply chain, including raw material producers, processors, recyclers, suppliers, manufacturers, and end users, as well as academic institutions and other stakeholders. ACMA's mission is to support the advancement of 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. Therefore, ACMA encourages Congress to advance policies that will support the growth of an independent and secure critical minerals supply chain – whether streamlining responsible permitting of the upstream extraction of minerals, funding and advancing innovative separation and recycling technologies, or establishing multilateral agreements with allies that share our interests.

It is increasingly apparent that the national security and economic risks associated with our reliance on foreign sources of minerals transcend any single economic sector, such as energy or transportation. In fact, those risks also threaten the growth of our national defense systems, as well as aerospace and additional manufacturing interests such as the production of semiconductors, electronics, specialty steel, and medical devices.

The reality of China's dominance over the global critical minerals supply is daunting. The resulting imbalances in the global market will only worsen without aggressive and persistent U.S. action on a variety of fronts. It is clear that in order to make meaningful progress the U.S. and its allies must further develop and scale numerous methods for producing, processing and refining critical minerals.

In addition to conventional production, we must advance policies and funding that support greater manufacturing efficiencies to reduce the need for virgin materials, build out our ability to reuse and recycle minerals from end-of-life products, and grow our ability to separate minerals from waste streams, amongst other efforts. In particular, the ability to reclaim and recycle certain critical minerals embedded in products at end-of-life (EOL) that are already sitting within our borders presents an important opportunity.[1] Since

[1] In fact, the IEA estimates that – globally -- recycled copper, lithium, nickel, and cobalt from spent batteries could provide for 10% of the demand for these minerals.

numerous minerals can be reclaimed and reused with little to no degradation in quality and performance,[2] growing recycling capacity should be a key piece of the United States' critical minerals strategy.[3] A robust and sustained effort by the Department of Energy and other federal agencies to innovate in this area will meaningfully serve to advance such an effort.

Therefore, as the Committee considers the role of federal agencies in the critical minerals supply chain, ACMA encourages you to consider policies and maintain funding for vital R&D programs that:

- Advance additional funding at the Department of Energy to incentivize the development, deployment, and scaling of processing and refining capacity in the United States;
- Further incentivize domestic recycling initiatives, for the reclamation and reuse of critical minerals from end-of-life products across the economy;
- Maintain and grow R&D initiatives to increase manufacturing efficiencies;
- Seek to develop and deploy technologies that employ alternative materials in advanced batteries and other applications;
- Advance workforce development initiatives to ensure our nation's next generation of workers is prepared to meet the future needs of our manufacturing sector;
- Ensure that the federal government is finalizing grants and other funding opportunities designed for the advancement of critical minerals interests in a timely manner; and
- Direct comprehensive data collection and analysis of technological barriers to better understand the potential to reclaim and recycle critical minerals from end-of-life products.

Whether for batteries, defense applications, clean transportation, renewable energy, medical devices, semiconductor production, or other manufacturing needs, our nation and our allies need predictable, secure and sustainable access to critical minerals. Investing in innovation is key to ensuring we are able to achieve this goal. The American Critical Minerals Association is grateful for this Committee's examination of these vital issues and looks forward to providing continued support for bipartisan efforts to advance policy goals that will secure our clean energy future and regrow our nation's manufacturing sector.

Sincerely,

Sarah Venuto
President, The American Critical Minerals Association

cc: Members of the Committee on Science, Space and Technology

[2] Gregory Barber. "Recycled Battery Materials Can Work as Well as New Ones." www.wired.com. Accessed September 23, 2023.
[3] According to the IEA, "the projected surge in spent volumes suggests immense scopes for recycling. Policy makers can help realise the potention through three specific actions: (i) facilitating the efficient collection and transport of spent batteries; (ii) fostering product design and labelling that help streamline the recycling process; and (iii) harmonising regulations on international movement of batteries." The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions. ww.ies.org/reports. Accessed September 24, 2023.