



# American Critical Minerals Association

## *October 2023 Newsletter Update*

Welcome to the American Critical Minerals Association's newsletter, which highlights U.S. policy developments relevant to building U.S. critical mineral processing and recycling capacity. We hope you find this to be an informative resource, and please email us at [info@critical-minerals.us](mailto:info@critical-minerals.us) if you have any feedback or suggestions for future content.

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### **WASHINGTON UPDATE**

While critical minerals remain front and center on the federal policy agenda, decision-makers in Washington are especially focused on the removal and replacement of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the terrorist attack on Israel.

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### **POLICY DEVELOPMENTS**

- I. ACMA Weighs in on U.S. Senate Energy & Natural Resources Hearing**
- II. ACMA Urges Passage of NDAA and Energy & Water, Defense Appropriations Bills**
- III. U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Holds Hearing on Critical Minerals**
- IV. U.S. House Energy & Commerce Committee Holds Hearing on U.S. Supply Chains**
- V. U.S. Senator Introduces Critical Minerals Legislation**
- VI. U.S. Department of Energy Launches Critical Minerals Collaborative**
- VII. U.S. State Department Launches Africa Push to Secure Critical Minerals Supply**
- VIII. Minerals Security Partnership Announces Support for Mining, Processing, and Recycling Projects**
- IX. U.S, EU Business Groups Call for Transatlantic Cooperation on Critical Minerals**

## **X. C5 + 1 Critical Minerals Dialogue: C5+1 Resilience through Security, Economic, and Energy Partnership**

### **I. ACMA Weighs in on U.S. Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee Hearing**

Ahead of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Sept. 28 [hearing](#) “to examine opportunities to counter the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) control of critical mineral supply chains through increased mining and processing in the United States as well as international engagement and trade,” ACMA sent a [letter](#) to Committee Chairman Joe Manchin and Ranking Member John Barrasso supporting their commitment to seeking solutions towards the U.S. bolstering the global critical mineral supply chain. ACMA urged the rapid advancement of policies, and encouraged Congress to advance policies that will support the growth of an independent and secure critical minerals supply chain

The hearing included discussion on how the U.S. can reduce dependence on China for critical minerals and cultivate extensive permitting reforms for mining projects. Members of both parties criticized the Administration for creating barriers to development in the domestic mineral supply chain, and also discussed the U.S. Geological Survey’s critical mineral list, proposed limitations on the FAST-41 program, and the Interior Department’s recent interagency working group report.

### **II. ACMA Urges Passage of NDAA and Energy & Water, Defense Appropriations Bills**

ACMA on Sep. 26 sent a [letter](#) to congressional leadership supporting the importance of the critical minerals provisions included in the FY24 National Defense Authorization Act, Energy and Water, and Defense appropriations bills, and urging Congress to pass the bills to ensure progress in strengthening the U.S. critical minerals supply chain and support our national security and domestic manufacturing base.

ACMA also encouraged 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.”

### **III. U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Holds Hearing on Critical Minerals**

The U.S. House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources on Sept. 13 held a [hearing](#) on “Examining the Methodology and Structure of the U.S. Geological Survey’s Critical Minerals List.” At the hearing, Democrats agreed with the current critical mineral list, but expressed interest in seeing an update of the Mining Act of 1872. On the other hand, Republicans stated the list requires updating and is subject to attacks from third party groups. A continued subject of discussion was the potential

national security risks the United States faces at the hands of adversarial nations and their control of the rare earth mineral market.

#### **IV. U.S. House Energy & Commerce Committee Holds Hearing on U.S. Supply Chains**

The U.S. House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce on Sept. 20 held a [hearing](#) on “Mapping America’s Supply Chains: Solutions to Unleash Innovation, Boost Economic Resilience, and Beat China.” Members discussed the U.S. reducing its dependence on China and shifting towards great domestic manufacturing with incentives to small businesses to remain in the U.S., methods of preventing future disruptions to supply chains, and potential organizational changes at the Commerce Department to improve supply chain response.

#### **V. U.S. Senator Introduces Critical Minerals Legislation**

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) on Sept. 28 [announced](#) the introduction of [legislation](#) (S. 2965, “American Energy Development and Growth Enhancement (EDGE) Act”) that would establish a \$50 million grant program to fund and support the environmental assessment, processing, mitigation, and clean-up necessary to mine or manufacture minerals. As to minerals eligible under the program, the Interior Secretary would identify up to twenty critical minerals most important for domestic manufacturing and to reduce America's dependence on mineral imports. Grant applicants would be required to demonstrate strong labor and environmental protection.

Wyden said that the legislation, which was referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, would “help America become a competitive producer of critical minerals and a clean energy manufacturing powerhouse.” He also called for reform of the Mining Law of 1872, saying that “America has the expertise, infrastructure and natural resources to lead the world in critical mineral development, but doing so will require a 21st Century approach to capitalize on the opportunity.”

#### **VI. U.S. Department of Energy Launches Critical Minerals Collaborative**

The U.S. Department of Energy on Sep. 21 [launched](#) the first Critical Materials Collaborative (CMC) along with \$10 million in funding to go towards a Critical Materials Accelerator Program. The CMC will utilize DOE investments from the Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Technologies Office's Critical Materials Innovation (CMI) Hub, as well as from the Fossil Energy and Carbon Management's (FECM) Critical Materials FOA. The collaborative will aim to accelerate the development of domestic critical material supply chains by improving research, development and demonstration (RD&D) and enabling RD&D researchers to have access to high-level resources.

Assistant Secretary of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management Brad Crabtree stated that as the global demand for critical minerals continues to grow, the CMC and investments from the Inflation Reduction Act are “creating the innovation ecosystem needed to get the

U.S. minerals sector back on track.”

## **VII. U.S. State Department Launches Africa Push to Secure Critical Minerals Supply**

POLITICO Pro on Sept. 25 [reported](#) on U.S. State Department meetings in Africa with officials and companies as part of an effort to reduce China’s dominance of the critical mineral supply chain. A State Department official said that the meetings in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were designed to help establish the two countries’ domestic processing capacity. A White House official speaking on condition of anonymity said that such efforts are needed due to demand that will exceed the United States’ production capacity, and that U.S. influence would help reduce the risk of child labor and environmental harms.

## **VIII. Minerals Security Partnership Announces Support for Mining, Processing, and Recycling Projects**

At the conclusion of their meetings in London, thirteen nations including the United States along with the European Union that comprise the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) on Oct. 10 [released](#) a Joint Statement announcing support for mining, processing, and recycling projects.

The Statement noted that MSP partners are working to advance seventeen projects with “a high potential to contribute to the development of responsible critical mineral supply chains, demonstrate high ESG standards, [and] facilitate the global energy transition,” including mining and mineral extraction, minerals processing, and recycling and recovery projects focused mainly on lithium, graphite, nickel, cobalt, manganese, copper, and rare earth elements. The projects are located in the Americas (5), Africa (7), Europe (3), and the Asia-Pacific (2).

## **IX. U.S, EU Business Groups Call for Transatlantic Cooperation on Critical Minerals**

Ahead of the United States-European Union Summit, the U.S Chamber of Commerce and BusinessEurope on Oct. 16 issued a [joint statement](#) calling on the United States and European Union to “reaffirm the importance of robust transatlantic commercial ties as an essential element of our enduring partnership.” In doing so, they noted that production of minerals including lithium, copper, nickel, cobalt, graphite and rare earths will have to increase 500% over the next ten years to meet demand, but that in many cases, “the world is dependent on a single source for the production or processing of these minerals.”

The Joint Statement called for the United States and European Union to cooperate with third parties to “responsibly increase production and processing capacity” and promote R&D for related technologies, and “reduce strategic dependencies on single countries and ensure security and sustainability of inputs for value-added industry sectors and the jobs they support.”

## **X. C5 + 1 Critical Minerals Dialogue**

C5+1 Resilience through Security, Economic, and Energy Partnership: The Presidents of the United States, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan on Sep. 20 [released](#) a joint statement from the first C5+1 Presidential Summit during the United Nations General Assembly.

C5+1 stated “Our attention to energy security in the region includes building diverse, resilient, and secure critical minerals supply chains; developing new technologies for the extraction and processing of raw materials; and adding value through regional industrial cooperation to reduce strategic dependencies and meet our respective economic, energy security, and climate goals. Demand for critical minerals, which are essential for clean energy and other technologies, will expand significantly in the coming decades. To further develop Central Asia’s vast mineral wealth and advance critical minerals security, we will launch a C5+1 Critical Minerals Dialogue. It will provide a forum in which the C5+1 can share information about critical minerals challenges and opportunities, promote connections between government officials and private sector industry, catalyze investment, and collaborate on critical minerals supply chains.”

## **RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **I. ACMA to Host Congressional Staff Briefing**

### **II. ACMA to Host Launch and Networking Reception**

### **III. ACMA Hosts Member Meeting and Luncheon**

### **IV. IEA Hosts Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Summit**

### **I. ACMA to Host Congressional Staff Briefing**

On **October 25**, ACMA will host a congressional staff briefing on “The Critical Minerals Supply Chain: Challenges and Opportunities Ahead” an educational Congressional staff briefing in coordination with House Manufacturing Caucus Co-Chairs David Joyce (OH) and Rep. Haley Stevens (MI). The briefing will include a panel discussion moderated by the Bipartisan Policy Center featuring 6k INC., Our Next Energy, and Albemarle.

### **II. ACMA to Host Launch and Networking Reception**

On **October 26**: ACMA will host a Launch and Networking Reception with industry and Capitol Hill stakeholders at Cornerstone Government Affairs’ office in Washington, DC. Please click [here](#) to RSVP.

### **III. ACMA Hosts Member Meeting and Luncheon**

On **September 19**, ACMA hosted a member meeting and luncheon in Washington,

DC with congressional staff and industry leaders for a roundtable discussion to advance policy strategy and review administration, agency, and appropriations developments.

#### **IV. IEA Hosts Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Summit**

The International Energy Agency's inaugural Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Summit [convened](#) on Sep. 28 with nearly 50 countries, industry leaders, investors, and civil society gathering to discuss the challenges and solutions related to critical minerals. The Summit aimed to address the growing demand for minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, and copper driven by the rapid deployment of clean energy technologies.

Six key action areas were identified, including accelerating diversified mineral supplies, promoting technology and recycling, enhancing market transparency, enhancing better available accurate and reliable data, creating incentives for sustainable production, and fostering international collaboration. An IEA ministerial meeting in February 2024 will focus on what critical minerals mean for the changing landscape of international cooperation on energy security and climate change, as well as announcing the next phase of the IEA Voluntary Critical Mineral Security Programme.

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### **NEWS, ANALYSIS & OPINION**

#### **I. 6K Energy and Aqua Metals Building First Circular Supply Chain of Critical Minerals for Lithium Battery Manufacturing in the U.S.**

#### **II. NGO Releases Report Outlining Actions Needed for Sustainable Critical Minerals Supply Chain**

#### **III. IMF Warns About Effects of Geoeconomic Fragmentation on Critical Minerals**

#### **IV. Company to Build Lithium-Ion Battery Processing Facility in Oklahoma**

6K Energy and Aqua Metals on Oct. 4 [announced](#) their plans to establish “the first truly sustainable circular supply chain in the United States for the critical minerals essential to domestic lithium battery manufacturing.” The partnership - which the companies called “a pivotal moment for decarbonization and electrification” in the United States – would feature a recycling facility in Jackson, TN that would be co-located with and supply a cathode manufacturing facility with feedstock necessary for production. The companies said that the plan would annually eliminate tens of thousands of tons of carbon emissions and waste.

6K Group President Sam Trinch said that the partnership is “advancing the low-carbon economy” and “fostering domestic job growth, technological advancement, and a sustainable footprint in the global lithium battery market, building a robust supply chain for the technologies critical to combating climate change at a lower cost than China.” Aqua Metals President and CEO Steve Cotton added that the venture will “strengthen[] U.S. manufacturing capabilities and bolster[] resilience to supply chain disruptions as we accelerate the clean energy economy.”

## **II. NGO Releases Report Outlining Actions Needed for Sustainable Critical Minerals Supply Chain**

The Center for American Progress (CAP) on Sep. 28 [announced](#) the release of a new [report](#) on how the U.S. can mine and use critical minerals while simultaneously protecting communities and the environment. In the wake of investments made by the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to bolster critical minerals supply and investments, the report calls on the United States to ensure that strong human rights protections and environmental regulations are at the forefront of the movement.

Among other things, CAP encourages the U.S. to use tax credits from the Inflation Reduction Act to improve labor conditions and set clear, enforceable standards for human rights, recommends implementing a framework to engage communities and develop ethical domestic mining standards, and urges the United States to provide clear and strong policy signals about the goals of the global energy transition to help guide corporate investment decisions and invest in research, development, and innovation, including a circular economy that minimizes ongoing extraction.

## **III. IMF Warns About Effects of Geoeconomic Fragmentation on Critical Minerals**

In a blog post [published](#) on Oct. 3, three International Monetary Fund economists outlined challenges faced by commodity markets due to geoeconomic fragmentation, including discussion on the implications for critical minerals and their role in the clean energy transition process. Noting the geoeconomic consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and subsequent restrictions in trade, the economists warned that additional fragmentation could result in “turmoil” for commodity markets and “hinder” the global energy transition. They also highlighted that the three largest mineral suppliers comprise ~70 percent of average global mined production, and that increasing mining and processing capacity “can take years, resulting in slow responses to price signals.”

In a scenario they developed with trade is disrupted, the economists said that investment in renewable energy and EVs could decline as much as 30 percent by 2030, calling it “yet another argument for multilateral cooperation” on trade policy. They also called on countries to de-risk the potential for such outcomes through actions including increased diversity in commodity supply sources, and more investment in critical mineral extraction, exploration, and recycling.

## **IV. Company to Build Lithium-Ion Battery Processing Facility in Oklahoma**

Blue Whale Materials on Sep. 20 [announced](#) its decision to construct a battery recycling processing plant in Bartlesville, Oklahoma to recycle critical minerals from lithium-ion batteries. Blue Whale Materials CEO Robert Kang said that the plant will “revolutionize how we reclaim these critical minerals and pave the way for a sustainable future” along with creating 700 jobs. The new plant will turn used lithium-ion batteries into a “Blacksand” product consisting of cobalt, nickel, and lithium. Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt added that the investment “aligns with our state’s ‘more of everything’ approach to our nation’s energy needs.”

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If you have questions or would like to learn more about the American Critical Minerals Association, please contact us at [info@critical-minerals.us](mailto:info@critical-minerals.us)



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