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Murkowski: Mineral Security Must Be a National Priority

114th Congress Offers Perfect Opportunity to Reform Obsolete, Ineffective Mineral Policies

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Sen Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, stressed the importance of strengthening our nation’s mineral security at today’s Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee’s hearing on S. 883, the American Mineral Security Act of 2015. The legislation, authored by Murkowski, would revitalize the United States’ minerals supply chain and help reduce our dependence on foreign suppliers.



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“We have a real problem on our hands, as a result of our nation’s borderline-insidious reliance on mineral imports. It’s not just rare earth elements. The reality is, the United States now depends on many other nations for a vast array of minerals, metals, and materials,” Murkowski said. “Electric vehicles, solar cells, advanced defense systems – you can almost name the technology, almost anything you can find in modern society, and then you can go look up who we import at least some of the raw materials from.

According to the [National Research Council](#), more than 25,000 pounds of new minerals are needed per person, per year in the U.S. to make the items we use for basic human needs, infrastructure, energy, transportation, communications, and defense. Yet the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) (USGS) also reports that we are now more than 50 percent dependent on foreign nations

for at least 43 separate mineral commodities, and a [recent survey](#) of manufacturing executives found that more than 90 percent worry about “supply disruptions outside of their control.”

The *American Mineral Security Act* is cosponsored by Sens. Heller, R-N.V., and Risch, R-Idaho. It builds on legislation that Murkowski has previously introduced to modernize our nation’s outdated mineral policies. S. 883 addresses issues up and down the critical minerals supply chain like critical mineral designations and permitting, recycling, and workforce development.

Witnesses at the hearing, representing the many stages of the critical minerals supply chain, agreed with Murkowski, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, that more needs to be done to allow America to harness its domestic supply of critical minerals.



Witnesses testify at today’s hearing on S. 883

[Dr. Suzette Kimball](#), Acting Director at the U.S. Geological Survey, affirmed USGS’ support of S. 883 and its goals to support the development of critical minerals in an environmentally responsible manner. “We do think the goals embraced in S. 883 will advance those priorities and we really commend you and the committee for elevating this very important issue,” Kimball said.

[Mr. Ed Fogels](#), Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, said, “On behalf of Governor Bill Walker, thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of the American Mineral Security Act of 2015. We applaud this effort to revitalize the United States’ critical minerals supply chain and reduce the nation’s dependence on foreign supply. I have also been entrusted by the 26 member and associate-member states of the Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC) to convey their strong support for S. 883 to the Subcommittee, and to express their gratitude for your leadership in this area.”

[Vice Admiral \(Ret.\) Kevin Cosgriff](#), President and CEO, National Electrical Manufacturers Association, said, “NEMA represents nearly 400 electrical equipment and medical imaging technology manufacturers. Our combined industries account for more than 400,000 American jobs and more than 7,000 facilities across the U.S. Domestic production exceeds \$117 billion per

year. Our industry is at the forefront on electrical safety, reliability, resilience, efficiency, and energy security. ... [For] us this legislation is about the government enabling U.S. manufacturing to compete fairly into the future because it will have access to the information, mineral, and other resources needed to do business... [We] find that the American Mineral Security Act takes a broad but measured and reasonable approach to updating and reinvigorating U.S. federal law and policy related to minerals that are most important for NEMA manufacturers.”

[Mr. Red Conger](#), President of Freeport-McMoRan Americas and Chairman of the Board of the National Mining Association, said, “I am testifying in support of on S. 883, the American Mineral Security Act of 2015. I want to thank Senator Murkowski for her leadership in introducing legislation, to address a key obstacle for the country’s economic growth and global competitiveness – a slow and inefficient permitting process for the mines that produce the minerals essential for our basic industries, technology, national defense and the products made here in America.”

[Dr. Richard Silbergliitt](#), Senior Physical Scientist, RAND Corporation, said, “While the United States has extensive mineral resources and is a leading global materials producer, it is dependent on imports for many materials that are critical inputs to manufacturing... While, as an independent and non-partisan organization, RAND does not endorse or oppose legislation, we note the parallels between some aspects of the American Mineral Security Act of 2015 and our recommended actions.”

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