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Chairman Hastings' Floor Statement on Bill to Cut Red-tape to Develop Rare Earth & Critical Minerals in U.S.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) delivered the following statement, as prepared for delivery, on the House floor today in support of H.R. 4402, *The National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act*:



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“The United States of America is rarely last at anything. Unfortunately, that is not the case when it comes to permitting mining projects. In 2012, the U.S. was ranked dead last, along with Papua New Guinea, out of twenty five major mining countries on the pace of permitting. Now, I can’t speak for Papua New Guinea, but the reason the U.S. is so slow to issue new mining permits is simple: Government bureaucracy.

Burdensome red-tape, duplicative reviews, frivolous lawsuits and onerous regulations can hold up new mining projects for more than a decade. These unnecessary delays cost Americans jobs as we become more and more dependent on foreign countries for raw ingredients to fuel manufacturing and our economy. The lack of American produced strategic and critical minerals are prime examples of how America has regulated itself into a 100 percent dependence on at least 19 unique minerals.

Rare earth elements, a special subset of strategic and critical minerals, are often the core components for the manufacturing of everything from national security systems to consumer electronics to medical equipment to renewable energy components and everyday household items.

Even though America has a plentiful supply of rare earth elements, our negative approach to producing these crucial materials has resulted in China producing 97percent of the

world's rare earth elements.

Just like the United States' dependence on foreign oil causes pain at the pump, Americans will soon feel the impact of China's monopoly on the rare earth element market that impact will be felt when they need a CAT scan, buy new computers for their small businesses, purchase an iPhone, or install solar panels on their roof.

H.R. 4402, the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act, introduced by Natural Resources Committee Member Mark Amodei of Nevada, will help to end this foreign dependence by streamlining government red tape that blocks American strategic and critical mineral production.

First and foremost, this is a jobs bill and the positive economic impact of this bill's intent will extend beyond the mining industry. For every metals mining job created, an estimated 2.3 additional jobs are generated. And for every nonmetals mining job create, another 1.6 jobs are created.

This legislation gives the opportunity for American manufacturers, small businesses, technology companies, and construction firms to use American resources to help make the products that are essential to our everyday lives and in the process also put more Americans back to work.

As China continues to tighten global supplies of rare earth elements, we should respond with an American mineral mining renaissance that will bring mining and manufacturing jobs back to America. The National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act will help supply our national security, high-tech, healthcare, agriculture, construction, communications and energy industries with homemade, American materials.

This bill is the latest example of House Republicans' commitment and focus on American job creation. The House has passed over 30 job creation bills that sit in the Senate, where Democrat leaders still refused to take action. This includes several bills from the Natural Resources Committee to increase production of our all-of-the-above energy resources and to protect and improve public access to public land.

H.R. 4402 will enable new American mineral production. We must act now to cut the government red tape that is stopping American mineral production that furthers our dependence on foreign minerals.

Vote yes for American jobs, American manufacturing and American-made products.

Thank you and I reserve the balance of my time."

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