

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's forum. My name is Mark Compton, and I'm the Executive Director of the American Exploration & Mining Association.

There has been a lot of discussion within the Biden Administration and Congress on the need to secure domestic supply chains, and rightly so. After all, events like the COVID-19 pandemic, the freakish Texas storm last year, shipping disruptions when the Suez Canal was temporarily blocked, and other events have exposed our supply chain vulnerabilities.

Minerals and metals are the building blocks for everything, from infrastructure and health care to national defense, clean energy and electric vehicles, necessitating a reliable domestic mineral supply chain. Mineral deposits are unique geologic phenomena, they are rare, and as the National Academy of Sciences stated, "mines can only be located in those few places where economically viable deposits were formed and discovered."

Keeping lands open to exploration and development improves the odds of finding the "needle in the haystack" mineral deposit. Unfortunately, already more than half of federal lands are off limits or severely restricted to mining. Further restricting access to important mineral resources, or even the threat of restricting access, has a chilling effect on investment. If we're not investing in mineral exploration, we're not discovering that "needle in a haystack" deposit that can be developed into a mine.

The fact is global mineral demand is skyrocketing. Minerals like copper, cobalt, and nickel are needed for clean energy technologies to meet carbon emission reduction objectives to address climate change. As noted in a report from the International Energy Agency, keeping global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels will quadruple the demand for the minerals needed to build wind turbines, solar panels and electric vehicles.

A faster energy transition — reaching net zero globally by 2050 as many, including the Biden Administration, have called for— would require critical mineral inputs to increase sixfold.

Made in America must include "mined in America" and sourcing minerals from U.S. mines that use state-of-the-art environmental protection measures, put a premium on worker health and safety, and have financial assurances that guarantee reclamation when mining is complete.

Mined products are key to the advanced, technological, and more healthful existence we all enjoy. Like food and water, minerals are essential, and it's more important than ever for the U.S. to responsibly utilize our own resources. Securing our domestic mineral supply chains is essential for our environment, our communities, and all Americans.