MISSION FOR AMERICA · CHAPTER 20 · AT A GLANCE

The Mission for Critical Minerals

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Every battery, wind turbine, electric motor, and mile of new power line depends on a short list of refined minerals, and China does most of the refining for the entire world: roughly 70 percent of global mineral processing and more than 90 percent of rare earth separation. The United States refines less than 1 percent of the world's lithium. At home, mining still runs on a law from 1872 that charges no royalty for minerals taken from public land and has left more than 500,000 abandoned mines behind.

This mission will:

- Build American refineries for lithium, rare earths, copper, nickel, cobalt, graphite, and manganese, financed by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) and backed by federal agencies committed to buying their output, with new jobs in mining, refining, and recycling.
- Recycle the metals in spent batteries, old electronics, mine waste, and coal ash through a national network of recycling plants and a standard that requires every battery and device to be collected.
- Replace the 1872 Mining Law with an 8 percent royalty on public-land minerals, cleanup bonded in full before any digging starts, strict protections for water, and a two-year deadline for permit decisions.
- Make tribal nations partners in the projects near their land, with a legal right to consent, ownership stakes of up to 51 percent, and a share of the new royalties.
- Sign long-term agreements with the countries that hold the ore, on terms that leave them owning a substantial share of the business and financed to refine more of it at home, and coordinate with allied buyers so they stop bidding against each other.
- Rebuild the National Defense Stockpile to roughly $30 billion and create a reserve that buys when prices fall and sells when they spike.

The rule for every mineral is at least three independent sources: American mines and refineries, two or more partner countries, and a growing recycling stream. Replacing dependence on China with dependence on any other single country would leave the same risk in place. The United States will keep working with China on refining research, environmental standards, and recycling, and keep buying Chinese material while American plants are being built.

Within 10 years, the country will refine 25–30 percent of the world's critical minerals, no mineral will depend entirely on imports, and no single country will be able to stall the clean energy transition by cutting off supply.