

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Hearing on “Trash to Treasure: Examining Legislation to Support Domestic Critical Mineral Recovery and Recycling”

June 24, 2026

Critical minerals are the building blocks of many modern technologies, from our cell phones to clean energy technologies like electric vehicles and solar panels. And as the world continues to shift towards clean energy to reduce costs, the demand for these minerals will continue to increase. That is why it is vital that we work to bolster our domestic critical mineral supply chain.

And as we do that, we must also focus on critical mineral recycling and recovery that increases resource efficiency, reduces the need to mine new minerals, and reduces waste. This represents a true win-win for our environment and our economy. For too long, we have allowed valuable critical minerals to go to landfills, never to be recovered. This must change if we want to remain globally competitive.

Domestic recycling of still-viable critical minerals also helps mitigate supply chain vulnerabilities. This is so important considering the United States is dangerously dependent on foreign adversaries, namely China, for critical mineral refining, processing, and even recycling, leaving our nation exposed to geopolitical supply chain risks. And that’s why domestic recycling of critical minerals can also help boost national security.

We know it is possible to shore up our critical material supply chains without compromising environmental and public health protections. Democrats support the responsible and sustainable build out of our domestic critical material supply chains. It’s important for our economy and national security, and necessary for the transition to cleaner and cheaper energy, particularly at a time when the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans have gone to war against clean energy.

It’s time Republicans join us in supporting clean energy rather than continually targeting it.

Democrats secured important down payments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included \$7.9 billion for battery materials processing, manufacturing, and recycling. It also directed the Environmental Protection Agency to develop battery collection best practices, voluntary battery labeling guidelines, and an extended producer responsibility framework for batteries to help grow our circular economy for critical minerals.

The Inflation Reduction Act included tax credits for electric vehicles, critical minerals for batteries, and battery manufacturing to expand our nation's capacity and boost supply chain resiliency.

While none of my Republican colleagues supported these historic laws, I am encouraged by today's conversation to advance critical mineral recycling and recovery.

The slate of bills span the breadth of critical minerals recovery, ranging from bipartisan ideas we can continue to work on together, to highly partisan ideas that Republicans pushed under a previous Congress. To that end, the wholesale industry deregulation in H.R. 3059 and the codification of troubling Trump Executive Orders in H.R. 4370 are bills I simply cannot support.

On the other hand, H.R. 3713, the Legacy Mine Cleanup Act, which creates a dedicated EPA program for cleaning up abandoned toxic mine sites, is a welcome bipartisan effort.

We will also consider three discussion drafts on battery recycling for critical minerals, a strategy for recovering critical minerals from discarded materials, and authorizing a program for reclaiming mining waste in search of critical minerals.

These discussion drafts are not perfect, but I believe they are heading in a promising direction. I look forward to continuing conversations with the Republican majority to improve these discussion drafts so we can secure bipartisan agreements.

While critical mineral recycling and recovery is essential to bolstering our domestic supply chains, it's important that we do it responsibly and in a way that mitigates risks and protects the environment, public health, and worker safety. And we must recognize and build off of the tremendous progress already underway at the state and local level.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.