

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

Subcommittee on Environment Member Raul Ruiz

***Hearing on “Help or Hindrance? The Impact of U.S. Environmental Laws on Critical
Material Supply Chains, National Security, and Economic Growth”***

April 22, 2026

On this Earth Day, I would like to take a moment to commemorate our bedrock environmental laws that keep our air clean, our drinking water safe, and our lands free of contamination. Despite what the title of this hearing implies, we do not have to choose between growing our economy and preserving the planet. Our country’s most fundamental environmental and public health laws help us lower energy costs and boost our economy, all while combating pollution and the climate crisis.

As it relates to the topic of today’s hearing, it is possible to shore up our critical material supply chains without compromising those same 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 energy, economic, and national security and necessary for the clean energy transition.

That is why Democrats secured important down payments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. Together, these laws included billions of dollars in federal investments to strengthen our critical material supply chains, create jobs, boost American manufacturing, and lower costs for hardworking families.

For example, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included \$7.9 billion for battery materials processing, manufacturing, and recycling. It also directed EPA to develop best practices for battery collection and voluntary labeling guidelines to help grow our circular economy for critical materials. The Inflation Reduction Act included tax credits for electric vehicles, domestic or ally-sourced critical materials for batteries, and domestic battery manufacturing to expand our capacity and boost our supply chain resiliency.

Instead of building on this important work, Republicans have taken a wrecking ball to many of these important demand drivers. They have canceled clean energy projects, programs, and incentives, and in the process, destroyed downstream manufacturing that is an essential facet to bolstering critical material supply chains. For example, due to the Republican attacks, clean vehicle and battery projects accounted for more than \$21 billion in lost investment in 2025. Needlessly dampening demand for critical minerals will jeopardize our ability to attract and grow domestic critical material operations.

Republicans continue to talk about the very threat from China, but their policies are misaligned with effectively competing with China in this sector.

The rest of the world, particularly China, is investing in the clean energy economy. China has created a vertically integrated model centered on supply and demand for clean energy technologies, like solar and batteries, giving them a stranglehold over the world's downstream, midstream, and upstream supply chain for critical materials.

If we want to get serious about combatting China's dominance over the critical material supply chain, Republicans and the Trump Administration need to stop their assault on homegrown clean energy. Their clean energy rollbacks undermine our efforts to lead the global clean energy transition, leaving the world to rely on China for critical minerals, and exposing us to geopolitical supply chain risks. To change this dynamic, we need a strong domestic market for clean energy technologies, so that companies are willing to make long-term investments in this sector.

Instead of scapegoating environmental laws, Congress must build on Democratic investments to create a domestic market for critical minerals, bolster domestic supply chains, create jobs, and fuel a clean-energy economy.

We also must strengthen our domestic capabilities to reduce our reliance on foreign sources. We must grow and cement our relationships with our friends and allies abroad to develop and access new critical mineral supply chains, also known as "friendshoring." The United States must invest in the processing of critical materials and battery recycling to increase the domestic supply of these resources. And we must rely on and invest in American ingenuity in creating innovative solutions that reduce the need for extraction, like innovative battery chemistries.

I welcome a productive conversation today about strengthening our critical material supply chains – but Democrats will not entertain the idea that we must roll back important environmental protections to do so.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and with that, I yield back the balance of my time.