

**Statement Submitted on Behalf of
The Minerals Science and Information Coalition**
Submitted by Dr. P. Patrick Leahy, Chair

**To the United States Senate
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Regarding S. 883, the American Mineral Security Act of 2015**
May 22, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a written statement for the record on behalf of the undersigned members of the Minerals Science and Information Coalition on S. 883, the American Mineral Security Act of 2015, and on the importance of the federal government's mineral science and information functions.

The **Minerals Science and Information Coalition** (MSIC or the Coalition) is a broad-based alliance of minerals and materials interests united in advocating for reinvigorated minerals science and information functions in the federal government. Our group is comprised of trade associations, scientific and professional societies, groups representing the extractive industries, processors, manufacturers, other mineral and material supply-chain users, and other consumers of federal minerals science and information. This testimony focuses largely on aspects of the American Mineral Security Act that increase the functionality of the U.S. Geological Survey's minerals science structure and programs.

Minerals are part of virtually all the products we use every day, acting as the raw materials for manufacturing processes or as the end products themselves. Minerals are contained in buildings, roads and civic infrastructure projects. They also are used in the manufacture of paper, glass, ceramics, plastics, refined metals, and a host of intermediary materials. These, in turn, find their way into the manufactured products that make up our daily lives: automobiles, mobile phones, and computers. They are critical ingredients in specialized applications for national defense and energy technologies. The mining industry underpins the high standard of living we enjoy and to which we've grown accustomed. Every sector of industry relies on a variety of minerals to generate their end products, making a stable and reliable supply chain critical for the continued growth and success of our economy.

The recent crisis in the global supply of rare earth elements caused by Chinese export restrictions is a case study in the importance of a stable mineral supply chain. Supply chains can be long, complex, and vulnerable to disruption for many reasons. The restrictions in the supply of rare earths threatened the production of components that are essential for U.S. defense systems, in addition to a vast array of communications, clean energy, electronics, automotive, and medical products. Both the private and the public sectors realize that we must reduce risks to our supply chains. But we cannot do this without accurate, timely information on the nature, location, and characteristics of our domestic mineral resources, and on the worldwide supply of, demand for, and flow of minerals and materials. This information is the foundation for identifying and forecasting existing and emerging vulnerabilities, and for sound decision making by business leaders and policy makers.

Given the vital national importance of minerals science and information, MSIC commends you, Chairwoman Murkowski, for recognizing the need for greater investment in minerals science and information and for introducing the American Minerals Security Act of 2015. MSIC supports the bill's aims to strengthen and improve our understanding of critical minerals and to develop a robust scientific and statistical information and forecasting capability to identify and anticipate threats to supply chains. We are particularly pleased to note Sec. 101, which will strengthen the development of forecasting tools needed for domestic production. Additionally, we support the development of a methodology for identifying critical minerals in Sec. 102, the prioritization of ongoing resource assessments found in Sec. 103, the promotion of responsible recycling of and alternatives to critical minerals in Sec. 107, the analysis and forecasting measures in Sec. 108, and the education and workforce component in Sec. 109. Members of the Coalition agree that impartial, scientific and statistical information is an essential foundation for national policy making.

The USGS plays a vital role in allowing leaders in our businesses and governmental institutions to make decisions based on the best information available on our resources. It is the Minerals Science and Information Coalition's belief that prioritizing both the science and information components of USGS's Mineral Resources Program is vitally important to our national defense and economic well-being. The American Minerals Security Act of 2015 is a

promising step towards the federal government reinvesting in our nation's ability to continue to develop and grow responsibly by using our own resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement for the record of this hearing.

American Chemical Society

American Geosciences Institute

American Physical Society

Geological Society of America

Industrial Minerals Association – North America

Materials Research Society

National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association

Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration, Inc.

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