

**Statement Submitted on Behalf of
The Minerals Science and Information Coalition**

Submitted by Mark Ellis, Chair

To the United States Senate

Energy and Natural Resources Committee

**Regarding, the Committee hearing to examine the United States' increasing dependence
on foreign sources of minerals and opportunities to rebuild and improve the supply
chain in the United States**

April 6, 2017

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 the Committee hearing to examine the United States' increasing dependence on foreign sources of minerals, and opportunities to rebuild and improve the supply chain in the United States, held on March 28, 2017.

The **Minerals Science and Information Coalition** (MSIC or the Coalition) is a broad-based alliance of minerals and materials interests groups 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 the testimony provided by Dr. Murray Hitzman, Associate Director – Energy and Minerals, U.S. Geological Survey U.S. Department of the Interior (USGS), and the important role USGS plays in providing and maintaining the minerals science and research that supports every sector of our economy.

Minerals and mineral materials 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.

Given the vital national importance of minerals science and information, MSIC commends you, Chairwoman Murkowski, for recognizing the need for greater understanding in minerals science and information, and the global mineral supply chain. The Coalition applauds the Committee for calling this hearing to discuss the United States' growing dependence on mineral imports, and would like to take the opportunity to offer support for some measures discussed during the hearing.

MSIC generally supports increased investment in minerals sciences, specifically through federal funding for the important work of USGS. As testified to by Dr. Hitzman, USGS provides important information on the "current production and consumption for 84 mineral commodities, both domestically and internationally for 180 countries" in the form of the annual *Mineral Commodities Summaries*. USGS is one of the only public and unbiased sources of this information that is used by industry and governments around the world. USGS's National Minerals Information Center (NMIC), in partnership with the Department of Energy developed "an early warning screening tool to identify critical minerals of concern for economic and national security and stay ahead of the curve as technology changes and geopolitical unrest shifts," which is another example of the invaluable work of USGS. This program, in particular, highlights the importance of investment in forecasting tools as a way to safeguard the supply chain. Additionally, MSIC was pleased to note the Chairwoman's interest in expanding USGS's geological mapping capabilities through federal investment. The USGS National Cooperative Geological Mapping Program is the primary source of funds for geological mapping in the U.S., and acts to foster partnerships at the Federal, State, and university levels.

Finally, MSIC offers its support for the reintroduction of S. 883, the American Mineral Security Act, in the 115th Congress. As in years past, the Coalition believes strongly in the stated goals of S. 883 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. 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 to the U.S. 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.

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 and the National Minerals Information Center is vitally important to our national defense and economic well-being. As such, the Coalition applauds the recent hearing for raising awareness of our national mineral resources and the importance in federal reinvestment 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 Chemistry Society

American Geosciences Institute

Industrial Minerals Association – North America

National Mining Association

National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association

Mining & Metallurgical Society of America

Contact information: Ariel Hill-Davis, Director, Industry Affairs, Industrial Minerals Association – North America, 1200 18th St NW, Suite 1150, Washington, D.C. 20036. arielhilldavis@ima-na.org. 202-457-0200.