

# MINERALS: AMERICA'S STRENGTH

Minerals provide the foundation for the American way of life. They inspire the innovation of new technologies, feed U.S. manufacturing and are vital to our national security. Minerals are put to use in lifesaving medical devices, our nation's infrastructure, defense technologies, and the computers and communication systems that connect us to the world. They propel our economy and enable America to compete globally.

## Mineral Facts

- **Minerals** – The technologies that define innovation today all depend on a growing number of minerals. For example, computer chips were once made with a palette of 12 minerals. Today, as many as 60 different minerals or their constituent elements are used in fabricating the high-speed, high capacity integrated circuits that are crucial to this technology.
- **Jobs** – 1.3 million American jobs are supported by minerals mining. 433,000 people are directly employed, and 872,000 are indirectly employed.
- **Wages** – A job in U.S. minerals mining is one of the highest paying in the private sector with an average salary of \$85,495 a year (74 percent higher than the combined average for all industrial jobs) and often climbing above \$100,000 for experienced workers.
- **Value** – In 2012, \$704 billion worth of processed mineral materials were used by sectors including construction, manufacturing and agriculture to add more than \$2.4 trillion to the U.S. economy.

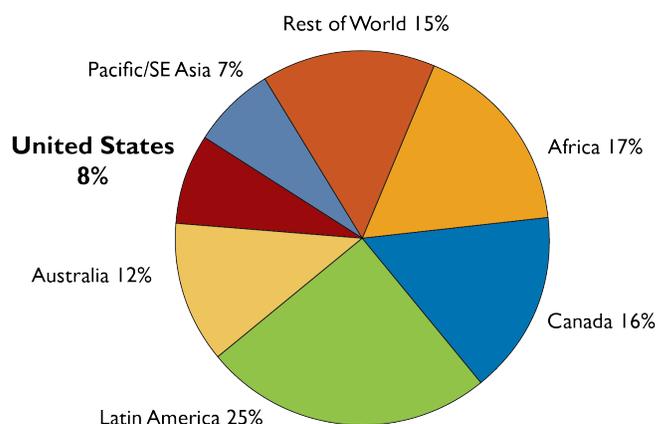
Despite the benefits provided by domestic minerals mining, the United States is not performing to its minerals potential. Though U.S. mines play an important role in meeting domestic demand, American manufacturers currently rely on foreign suppliers for more than half the minerals they use. Our ability to put our minerals to work is hindered by a costly and inefficient regulatory structure that thwarts investment and expansion.

## Consider:

- The percentage of worldwide exploration spending commanded by the U.S. for metals mining has dropped from 20 percent of total investments in 1993 to only 8 percent today.
- The U.S. is 100 percent dependent on imports for 18 different minerals and more than 50 percent import dependent for an additional 41 mineral commodities.

These trends are unsustainable in a highly competitive world economy in which the demand for minerals continues to grow and supply stability is a growing concern. The United States needs the public policies that will unlock the full potential of our immense mineral endowment. Most importantly, we need to address the length, complexity and uncertainty of the permitting process that is driving investment from U.S. shores. A duplicative permitting process that takes five to ten years to navigate puts

Declining U.S. Share of Worldwide Exploration Spending, 2012



Source: SME Mining Engineering Magazine, May 2013

## Metal Used in a Fighter Jet Engine

Metal	Amount (tons)	Import Dependence
Titanium (Sponge)	2.7	64%
Nickel	2.7	49%
Chromium	0.9	70%
Cobalt	0.6	78%
Aluminum	0.5	100%
Niobium	0.1	100%
Tantalum	1.2 kg	100%

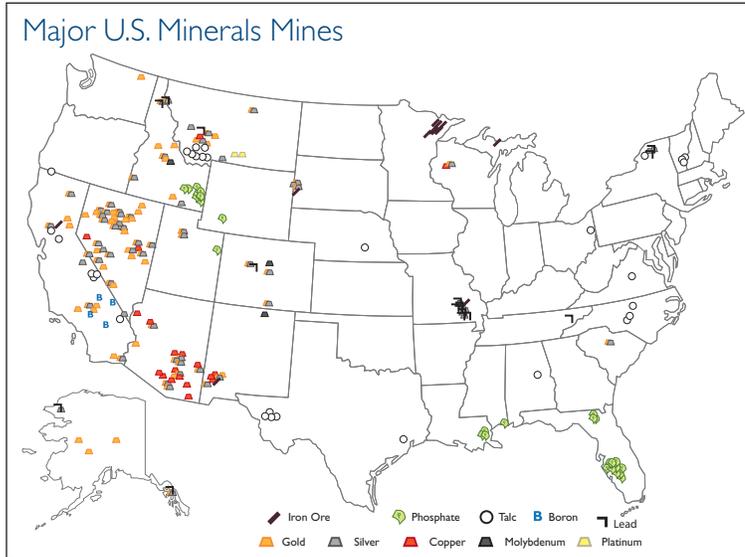


Sources: USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2013; British Geological Survey.

the U.S. dead last among top mining countries when ranked on mining permitting delays.

## Permitting Solutions in H.R. 761:

H.R. 761, the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act, was approved in September 2013 by a bi-partisan vote in



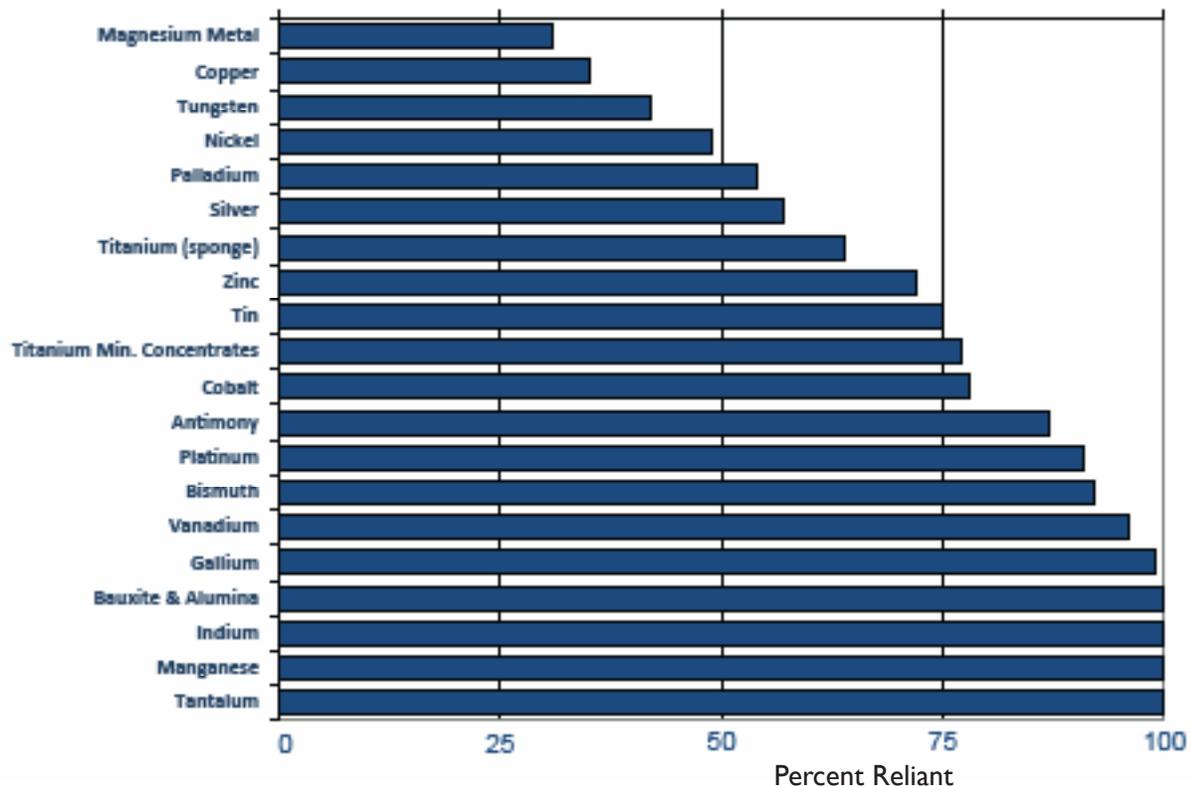
Source: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

the House and would establish a 21st Century permitting system for U.S. mining. H.R. 761 carefully and credibly addresses the pitfalls of our current outdated and underperforming permitting system by:

- providing efficient, timely and thorough permit reviews;
- incorporating best practices for coordination among state and federal agencies;
- clarifying responsibilities and avoiding duplication; and
- setting binding timeframes.

H.R. 761 provides a more efficient permitting system without changing environmental and other protections provided by current laws and regulations, such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Solid Waste Disposal Act and numerous others. H.R. 761 will bring the U.S. in line with our competitors for minerals exploration investments—countries such as Australia and Canada that have already modernized their permitting regime. H.R. 761 is good public policy that will benefit all Americans. Final passage is needed to ensure our nation can realize the full potential of U.S. minerals mining.

## Selected Critical Minerals U.S. Net Import Reliance, 2012



Source: USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2013 and National Research Council, *Minerals, Critical Minerals, and the U.S. Economy*