

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 19, 2023

Dr. Nedal Nassar  
Chief of Mineral Intelligence Research  
U.S.G.S. National Center  
Room 7A102, Mail Stop 119  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Dr. Nassar,

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources at an oversight hearing titled, "*Examining the Methodology and Structure of the U.S. Geological Survey's Critical Minerals List*" on Wednesday, September 13, 2023.

Your testimony was extremely helpful in defining the Subcommittee's understanding of the issue and I appreciate the effort you took to prepare and present your testimony. While many questions were asked during the hearing, the Subcommittee has additional questions, attached, for your reply.

Please forward your responses to Lonnie Smith, Clerk of the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, at [Lonnie.smith@mail.house.gov](mailto:Lonnie.smith@mail.house.gov) by October 3, 2023. Your assistance in meeting this deadline is requested, as failure to meet it will be noted in the printed transcript.

Sincerely,



Pete Stauber  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources  
Chairman

**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources**  
**Oversight Hearing**  
**1324 Longworth House Office Building**  
**September 13, 2023**  
**10:15 AM**

*“Examining the Methodology and Structure of the U.S. Geological Survey’s Critical Minerals List.”*

**Questions from Rep. Stauber for [Dr. Nedal Nassar]**

1. In response to a question from Congressman Collins regarding the possibility of incorporating subcategories of critical minerals by sector or end use into the critical minerals list, you replied this was an interesting idea to consider. How might USGS go about creating such categorizations?
2. When can Congress expect the publication of the Annual Critical Mineral Outlook as required by the Energy Act of 2020?
3. Given the requirements for forward-looking data gathering in the Energy Act of 2020, does USGS have all the statutory authority it needs to utilize forecasting analysis in the formation of future iterations of the critical minerals list should it be directed to do so by Congress?
4. How was the Fraser Institute’s policy perception index, an opinion survey of mining executives, decided on for the sole source of data on a country’s ability to supply resources (ASI)?
5. Were non-subjective sources of data on the socio and geopolitical stability of source countries (for example, Uppsala University’s Uppsala Conflict Data Program) considered as measures of a country’s ability to supply (ASI)? If so, why were they not utilized?
6. The methodology for trade exposure (TE) reviews trade activity for a mineral at a single point in time. How does this methodology address minerals with no immediate critical need, but which are predicted to become critical under common scenario analyses?
7. The methodology relies heavily on the accurate and fulsome identification of source countries. How were the source countries identified, and what criteria was used in determining whether a single or multiple countries would be examined as a source for a mineral?
8. If USGS had not interpreted the Energy Act of 2020 as barring uranium from consideration as a critical mineral, would the known vulnerabilities in the uranium supply chain have otherwise qualified it for inclusion in the updated 2022 Critical Minerals List?

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**Questions from Rep. Robert J. Wittman for Dr. Nedal Nassar**

1. How frequently is the Critical Mineral List updated, and what factors trigger updates or revisions to the list? Are there any plans to make this process more regular or responsive to changing market conditions?
2. Are there fixed or universally defined thresholds for criteria to determine if a mineral is classified as critical? If not, why not?
3. How transparent is the decision-making process for what minerals are classified as critical?