

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4018

To unleash America's offshore critical minerals and resources.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 17, 2025

Mr. EZELL (for himself and Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To unleash America's offshore critical minerals and
resources.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) The United States has a core national secu-
6 rity and economic interest in maintaining leadership
7 in deep sea science and technology and seabed min-
8 eral resources.

1 (2) The United States faces unprecedented eco-
2 nomic and national security challenges in securing
3 reliable supplies of critical minerals independent of
4 foreign adversary control.

5 (3) Vast offshore seabed areas hold critical min-
6 erals and energy resources.

7 (4) These resources are key to strengthening
8 our economy, securing our energy future, and reduc-
9 ing dependence on foreign suppliers for critical min-
10 erals.

11 (5) The United States also controls seabed min-
12 eral resources in one of the largest ocean areas of
13 the world.

14 (6) Our Nation can, through the exercise of ex-
15 isting authorities and by establishing international
16 partnerships, access potentially vast resources in
17 seabed polymetallic nodules, other subsea geologic
18 structures, and coastal deposits containing strategic
19 minerals such as nickel, cobalt, copper, manganese,
20 titanium, and rare earth elements, which are vital to
21 our national security and economic prosperity.

22 (7) Our Nation must take immediate action to
23 accelerate the responsible development of seabed
24 mineral resources, quantify the Nation's endowment
25 of seabed minerals, reinvigorate American leadership

1 in associated extraction and processing technologies,
2 and ensure secure supply chains for our defense, in-
3 frastructure, and energy sectors.

4 (8) It is the policy of the United States to ad-
5 vance United States leadership in seabed mineral de-
6 velopment by—

7 (A) rapidly developing domestic capabilities
8 for the exploration, characterization, collection,
9 and processing of seabed mineral resources
10 through streamlined permitting without com-
11 promising environmental and transparency
12 standards;

13 (B) supporting investment in deep sea
14 science, mapping, and technology;

15 (C) enhancing coordination among execu-
16 tive departments and agencies with respect to
17 seabed mineral development activities described
18 in this Act;

19 (D) establishing the United States as a
20 global leader in responsible seabed mineral ex-
21 ploration, development technologies, and prac-
22 tices, and as a partner for countries developing
23 seabed mineral resources in areas within their
24 national jurisdictions, including their exclusive
25 economic zones;

(E) creating a robust domestic supply chain for critical minerals derived from seabed mineral resources to support economic growth, reindustrialization, and military preparedness, including through new processing capabilities; and

(F) strengthening partnerships with allies and industry to counter China's growing influence over seabed mineral resources and to ensure United States companies are well-positioned to support allies and partners interested in developing seabed minerals responsibly in areas within their national jurisdictions, including their exclusive economic zones.

SEC. 2. STRATEGIC SEABED CRITICAL MINERAL ACCESS.

(a) EXPEDITING ISSUANCE OF CERTAIN AUTHORIZATIONS UNDER DEEP SEABED HARD MINERAL RESOURCES ACT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and in consultation with the Secretary of State and Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management,

1 shall expedite the process for reviewing and issuing
2 licenses for exploration and permits for commercial
3 recovery under the Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Re-
4 sources Act (30 U.S.C. 1401 et seq.).

5 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—In expediting the process
6 described in paragraph (1), the entities described in
7 that paragraph shall ensure efficiency, predictability,
8 and competitiveness for United States companies.

9 (b) EXPEDITING ISSUANCE OF CERTAIN AUTHORIZA-
10 TIONS UNDER OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF LANDS
11 ACT.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after
13 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
14 of the Interior shall establish an expedited process
15 for reviewing and approving permits for prospecting
16 and granting leases under the Outer Continental
17 Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

18 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The expedited process es-
19 tablished under paragraph (1) shall ensure effi-
20 ciency, predictability, and competitiveness for United
21 States companies.

22 (c) SEABED MAPPING PLAN.—Not later than 60
23 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
24 retary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary
25 of State, Secretary of Commerce, and heads of other rel-

1 evant Federal agencies, and in cooperation with commer-
2 cial and other nongovernmental organizations, shall de-
3 velop a plan to map priority areas of the seabed United
4 States outer Continental Shelf, to include extended areas
5 of the outer Continental Shelf, such as those with abun-
6 dant or accessible seabed mineral resources, to accelerate
7 data collection and characterization.

8 (d) IDENTIFICATION OF CERTAIN CRITICAL MIN-
9 ERALS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the en-
10 actment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior—

11 (1) shall identify which critical minerals may be
12 derived from seabed mineral resources; and

13 (2) in coordination with the Secretary of De-
14 fense and Secretary of Energy, determine which crit-
15 ical minerals derived from seabed mineral resources
16 are essential for applications such as defense infra-
17 structure, manufacturing, and energy.

18 (e) ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY PARTNERS AND AL-
19 LIES.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after
21 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
22 of Commerce, in coordination with the Secretary of
23 State, Secretary of the Interior, and Secretary of
24 Energy, shall engage with key partners and allies to
25 offer support for seabed mineral resource explo-

1 ration, extraction, processing, and environmental
2 monitoring in areas within the jurisdictions of such
3 key partners and allies, including by—

4 (A) seeking scientific collaboration and
5 commercial development opportunities for
6 United States companies; and

7 (B) developing a prioritized list of foreign
8 countries for engagement.

9 (2) KEY PARTNER OR ALLY DETERMINATION.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State
11 shall determine whether an entity is a key part-
12 ner or ally for the purposes of this Act, based
13 on factors such as—

14 (i) existing agreements with the
15 United States;

16 (ii) alignment with strategic interests
17 of the United States; and

18 (iii) participation in joint initiatives.

19 (B) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary of
20 State shall notify the Secretary of Commerce,
21 Secretary of the Interior, and Secretary of En-
22 ergy of any determination made under subpara-
23 graph (A).

24 (f) REPORTS.—Not later than 60 days after the date
25 of the enactment of this Act—

1 (1) the Secretary of the Interior, in coordina-
2 tion with the Secretary of Commerce and Secretary
3 of Energy, and in consultation with the heads of
4 other relevant Federal agencies, shall submit to the
5 Committee on Natural Resources of the House of
6 Representatives and the Committees on Energy and
7 Natural Resources and Commerce, Science, and
8 Transportation of the Senate a report that identifies
9 private sector interest in and opportunities for sea-
10 bed mineral resource exploration and mining on the
11 outer Continental Shelf, in areas beyond national ju-
12 risdiction, and in areas within the jurisdiction of a
13 foreign country that expresses interest in partnering
14 with United States companies with respect to seabed
15 mineral resource development; and

16 (2) the Secretary of the Interior, jointly with
17 the Secretary of State, Secretary of Commerce, and
18 Secretary of Energy, shall submit to the Committee
19 on Natural Resources of the House of Representa-
20 tives and the Committees on Energy and Natural
21 Resources and Commerce, Science, and Transpor-
22 tation of the Senate a report regarding the feasi-
23 bility of an international benefit-sharing mechanism
24 for seabed mineral resource extraction and develop-

1 ment that occurs in an area beyond the jurisdiction
2 of any country.

3 **SEC. 3. GENERAL PROVISIONS.**

4 (a) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act
5 shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the au-
6 thority granted by law to an executive department or agen-
7 cy, or the head thereof.

8 (b) NO CREATION OF RIGHT OR BENEFIT.—This Act
9 does not create any right or benefit, substantive or proce-
10 dural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against
11 the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, offi-
12 cers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

13 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) COMMERCIAL RECOVERY.—The term “com-
16 mercial recovery” has the meaning given the term in
17 section 4 of the Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Re-
18 sources Act (30 U.S.C. 1403).

19 (2) CRITICAL MINERAL.—The term “critical
20 mineral” has the meaning given the term in section
21 7002(a)(3) of the Energy Act of 2020 (30 U.S.C.
22 1606(a)(3)).

23 (3) EXPLORATION.—The term “exploration”
24 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the

1 Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act (30
2 U.S.C. 1403).

3 (4) LEASE.—The term “lease” has the meaning
4 given the term in section 2 of the Outer Continental
5 Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331).

6 (5) MINERAL.—The term “mineral” means—

7 (A) a critical mineral;

8 (B) uranium;

9 (C) copper;

10 (D) potash;

11 (E) gold; and

12 (F) any other element or compound the
13 Chair of the National Energy Dominance Coun-
14 cil determines appropriate.

15 (6) OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF.—The term
16 “outer Continental Shelf” has the meaning given the
17 term in section 2 of the Outer Continental Shelf
18 Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331).

19 (7) PROCESSING.—The term “processing” in-
20 cludes the concentration, separation, refinement,
21 alloying, and conversion of minerals into usable
22 forms.

23 (8) PROSPECTING.—The term “prospecting”
24 has the meaning given the term “geological and geo-
25 physical (G&G) prospecting activities” in section

1 580.1 of title 30, Code of Federal Regulations (or a
2 similar successor regulation).

3 (9) SEABED MINERAL RESOURCE.—The term
4 “seabed mineral resource” means a mineral-bearing
5 material located in the seabed of the outer Conti-
6 nental Shelf, including—

7 (A) a polymetallic nodule;

8 (B) a cobalt-rich ferromanganese crust;

9 (C) a polymetallic sulfide;

10 (D) a heavy mineral sand; and

11 (E) a phosphorite.

12 (10) UNITED STATES COMPANY.—The term
13 “United States company” has the meaning given the
14 term “United States citizen” in section 4 of the
15 Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act (30
16 U.S.C. 1403).

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