

**Statement for the Record
U.S. Geological Survey
Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources**

H.R. 2969, Finding Opportunities for Resource Exploration Act (Finding ORE Act)

February 24, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement for the record on H.R. 2969, Finding Opportunities for Resource Exploration Act (Finding ORE Act).

H.R. 2969 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), to negotiate agreements with partner foreign countries to map critical minerals and rare earth elements to promote the security and resilience of these minerals' international supply chains. The bill would also require the Secretary to notify Congress at least 30 days before entering into such an agreement.

In partnership with the State Geological Surveys, the USGS delivers high-quality data needed to understand our Nation's geology, find new critical and other mineral resources, and inform decisions about how the Nation will meet its evolving needs. The Department of the Interior (Department) is ensuring the minerals integral to our energy, defense and technology supply chains are mined and processed in the United States including through the USGS Earth Mapping Resources Initiative which is modernizing mapping of the Nation's surface and subsurface.

While the Department is committed to identifying and mapping domestic critical mineral resources, we note the USGS is currently authorized to enter into memoranda of understanding and other cooperative agreements with foreign countries, agencies and entities to formalize scientific collaborations including mineral mapping. Should Congress advance H.R. 2969, the Department would like to work with the committee to ensure proprietary data is protected from inappropriate disclosure in accordance with the Department's scientific integrity policies and address certain Constitutional concerns identified by the Department of Justice.