



April 24, 2026

The Honorable Pete Stauber
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy
and Mineral Resources
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Yassamine Ansari
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and
Mineral Resources
Committee on Natural Resources
1332 Longworth Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Oversight Hearing: “Powering the 21st Century with American Copper”

Dear Chairman Stauber and Ranking Member Ansari:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter for the record regarding the critical role of copper in powering the 21st century economy and the urgent need to strengthen domestic supply chains.

Arizona stands at the center of this issue. Our state currently produces over 70 percent of the nation’s copper, making it indispensable to U.S. manufacturing, infrastructure, and national security. Copper mining contributes over \$21 billion annually to Arizona’s economy, supports tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs, and underpins rural communities across the state. Simply put, the future of American copper is inseparable from the future of Arizona.

The Arizona Mining Association (AMA) is a non-profit corporation comprised of 197 entities engaged in mining and mineral processing, & suppliers to the industry in Arizona. The AMA is the unified voice of responsible, sustainable and safe mining in Arizona. Through our advocacy, we help Arizona continue to be a premier location for mining investment in the U.S.

The January 2026 S&P Global report, “Copper in the Age of AI: the Challenges of Electrification,” underscores a growing imbalance between global copper demand and supply. Electrification trends, including electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, grid modernization, data centers, and artificial intelligence infrastructure, are dramatically increasing copper demand. S&P Global projects that without significant new investment and development, global copper supply will fall short of demand by 2040, creating structural deficits. Additionally, Arizona has become the Silicon Valley of the desert and without sufficient supply of copper the state’s GDP risks significant impact.

For Arizona, a looming copper shortfall presents both opportunity and risk. Despite vast reserves, the state faces lengthy federal permitting timelines that often exceed ten and in some situations 20 years, delaying or preventing new mine development. Without reform, Arizona’s ability to respond to rising demand will be limited. Mining supports high paying jobs in rural counties such as Pinal, Greenlee, and Mohave, and supply constraints combined with regulatory uncertainty threaten long term investment and job stability. Arizona producers also compete globally, and if domestic production is hindered, supply gaps will be filled by foreign sources, often with lower environmental and labor standards, putting U.S. producers at a disadvantage.

A sustained copper shortfall would have far reaching national consequences. Copper is essential for transmission lines, renewable energy systems, and electric vehicles, and shortages will increase costs for infrastructure projects while delaying energy transition goals. The United States is increasingly reliant on foreign sources for critical minerals, and insufficient domestic copper production exposes the nation to geopolitical risks and supply disruptions. Copper is also foundational to defense systems, communications, and advanced technologies, meaning supply instability presents a direct risk to national security and readiness. In addition, data centers and advanced computing infrastructure require significant copper inputs, and supply constraints could hinder U.S. leadership in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.

To build a resilient and secure domestic copper supply chain, Congress should take several key actions. First, it should continue attempts to modernize and streamline permitting by establishing clear, efficient, and predictable timelines for mine approvals while maintaining strong environmental standards, as reducing permitting delays is the most impactful step to unlocking domestic copper production. Second, it should support domestic production and processing by incentivizing investment in U.S. based mining, refining, and recycling through tax policy, public private partnerships, and targeted funding, thereby strengthening the full value chain and reducing reliance on foreign sources. Third, it should recognize copper as a strategic mineral to prioritize and expedite its development in federal policy, improve access to financing, and align national security objectives with resource development.

Arizona's copper industry is ready to meet this challenge. With abundant reserves, a skilled workforce, a world class mining engineering program at the University of Arizona and a long history of responsible and innovative mining practices, the state can play a central role in securing America's energy future. However, without timely policy action, the United States risks falling behind in the global race for resources that are foundational to economic growth, technological leadership, and national security.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and for your leadership in addressing the nation's copper supply challenges. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Trussell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

Steve Trussell
Arizona Rock Products Association
Phoenix, Arizona
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