



THIRD WAY

July 20, 2026

The Honorable Pete Stauber
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy & Minerals
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Yassamin Ansari
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy & Minerals
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Stauber, Ranking Member Ansari, and Members of the Subcommittee,

We are pleased to submit this statement for the record from Third Way, a national think tank and advocacy organization that champions centrist, tech-inclusive innovation policy to deliver affordable, reliable, secure and clean energy to Americans.

We write in support of H.R. 9640, the *Earth MRI Reauthorization Act of 2026*. This program has been vital for the modernization and digitization of essential data needed to map and locate key domestic resources for America's national security, including accurate airborne surveys of critical mineral deposits and energy resources, aimed at preventing over reliance on foreign imports.

The information Earth MRI aggregates is not only an invaluable resource to the geologic science community, but also directly supports economic development around all 50 states, particularly via energy technologies that relate to the subsurface - geothermal, critical minerals, carbon storage, and geologic hydrogen. Better data from Earth MRI will lead to more targeted exploration operations, which helps industry be more efficient and protect both private and public lands by helping ensure drilling operations are more closely focused at the site of the resource. Congressional support, through both reauthorization and adequate annual appropriations, is needed to make sure that Earth MRI can achieve the ambitious, laudatory goal that Congress established in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: completing subsurface mapping of the entire United States by 2031.¹

Third Way also supports H.R. 9640 for its recognition of natural hydrogen characterization as one of the named priorities for subsurface data collection under Earth MRI. Hydrogen found within the subsurface, or geologic hydrogen, is sourced from either naturally occurring reservoirs deep underground or produced by replicating or enhancing natural geochemical processes within the subsurface. Like other forms of hydrogen, geologic hydrogen is more energy-dense than oil or methane, but produces water as a byproduct instead of greenhouse gases. The very concept of geologic hydrogen

¹ P.L. 117-58, Section 40201. <https://www.congress.gov/117/plaws/publ58/PLAW-117publ58.pdf>



**CLEAN
AFFORDABLE
RELIABLE**

was largely unknown even in energy circles before January 2025, when the U.S. Geological Survey published a resource potential map of the lower forty-eight United States.² The USGS map suggested that the United States could have a significant hydrogen resource in the subsurface, particularly in states like Michigan and Minnesota, that could theoretically be produced at much lower cost than current hydrogen production methods allow.

Hydrogen is both a clean burning fuel and a crucial feedstock for commercial fertilizer and sustainable liquid fuels for ships and airplanes. It can also be used for refining chemicals and critical minerals. Given the expanding conflict in the Strait of Hormuz, there has been a major supply shock in global hydrogen production, which traditionally relies upon low-cost natural gas. It is now more appropriate than ever to explore other pathways for domestic hydrogen production to ensure security of supply.

Third Way has worked to grow the policy and technical dialogue around geologic hydrogen, including through a convening in Ypsilanti, Michigan, in September 2025.³ One of the key conclusions from this convening was the need to invest in pre-competitive research and data collection and consolidation. If reauthorized and provided adequate appropriations by Congress, Earth MRI will be a powerful tool to identify domestic critical mineral deposits and potentially co-located geologic hydrogen resources, which could be used for on-site refining.

While investment and scientific inquiry around geologic hydrogen has ticked up significantly since USGS published its resource map last year, the concept itself has still yet to be recognized by Congress in authorizing legislation. Third Way commends Representatives Wittman and Dingell for their foresight in recognizing geologic hydrogen and for encouraging continued resource assessment work at USGS on all subsurface resources through this bill. We also thank the Committee and its staff for their bipartisan efforts on the bill thus far.

Respectfully,

Ryan Fitzpatrick
Vice President of Climate and Energy
Third Way

² USGS releases first-ever map of potential for geologic hydrogen in the U.S. United States Geological Survey. January 16, 2025. Available at <https://www.usgs.gov/news/national-news-release/usgs-releases-first-ever-map-potential-geologic-hydrogen-us>

³ See Third Way's recent blog post, "Hydrogen's Next Frontier... Underground." February 3, 2026. Available at <https://www.thirdway.org/blog/hydrogens-next-frontier-underground>.