

# Testimony for the Record

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Date: June 24, 2025

To:

The Honorable Chairman Roger Williams  
The Honorable Ranking Member Galton  
House Committee on Small Business  
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Testimony for the Record – Ensuring Small Business Access to Critical Minerals for U.S. Innovation and Security

Dear Chairman Williams, Ranking Member Galton, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. As President of Blue Stone Delta and an advisor to small businesses advancing frontier technologies—from photonic processors at Strike Photonics to secure communications at Open Droids—I offer this testimony from the perspective of someone actively building and navigating the innovation economy. My work has also included engagements with national laboratories, defense industrial base suppliers, and early-stage mineral development projects.

This hearing could not be more timely. We stand at a pivotal moment. Small businesses across the U.S. are on the frontlines of advanced manufacturing, robotics, and AI-driven systems, yet the inputs that power these breakthroughs—gallium, dysprosium, neodymium, graphite, cobalt, lithium—remain largely sourced from unstable or adversarial foreign supply chains. These are not niche materials; they are foundational to everything from photonics to electric motors, satellite systems, and beyond.

China controls 90% of the global downstream rare earth market, along with critical portions of the supply chain for other strategic materials. The reality is simple: the future of American innovation depends on secure, domestic access to these materials. This is not just a mining challenge—it's a permitting, financing, and procurement problem.

In parallel, I am also working on building a blockchain framework to track rare earth elements and critical minerals through a commodities exchange. This initiative is designed to ensure transparency, provenance, and supply chain security from source to strategic application, and may ultimately serve a global or U.S.-anchored structure depending on the final design.

In my role as an advisor to the Alliance for Mineral Security, I've worked closely on policy concepts that appear throughout this testimony. These recommendations align with AMS

initiatives to support domestic capacity, reduce permitting friction, and ensure the future of critical supply chains.

Small businesses cannot wait 20 years for permits or compete with state-subsidized Chinese firms without a stable domestic framework. They need a pathway to scale. Here are key recommendations that would directly strengthen small business access and national supply chain resilience:

## Policy Recommendations

- Authorize the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) to take options on commercially warehoused critical minerals. This mechanism allows for flexible, cost-efficient access to material without distorting domestic commercial markets, ensuring that both small businesses and the defense industrial base can meet urgent material needs.
- Establish a Department of Defense Price Index for ex-China materials and components—gallium, dysprosium, neodymium, graphite, cobalt, lithium, and others. This would set a predictable acquisition ceiling, enabling government and small business procurement to proceed without fear of Chinese market manipulation.
- Create a streamlined, dedicated application process for small businesses applying for federal grants under \$100 million. This should include an explicit 'small business advantage' analogous to federal contracting rules, ensuring startups and SMEs can access federal funding on fair terms.
- Grant automatic expedited status under the EB-5 immigrant investor program for critical mineral and industrial base projects. By reducing immigration and capital deployment risk, this pathway would unlock funding for innovative supply chain development and expansion.
- Establish and implement a Critical Supply Chain Sectors designation. Projects operating within designated sectors (minerals, magnets, semiconductors, advanced manufacturing) would receive targeted tax incentives, FAST-41 permitting, and coordinated interagency support through DOD and the Office of Industrial Base Policy.

The solution is not just to mine more. It is to support and scale the processing, recycling, component manufacturing, and systems integration led by U.S. companies—particularly small businesses that move fast and innovate faster.

We must ensure the future of U.S. photonics, robotics, and precision manufacturing is not lost due to dependence on materials processed overseas. If we fail to support these early-stage efforts now, we will continue to lag behind where we should lead.

America can't lead in advanced tech if it begs for the materials to build it.

Supply chains win wars—startups build them.

We either build the foundation now, or we buy it back later at ten times the price.

We stand at a precipice, a cliff if you will, and like Icarus, without the critical minerals and rare earths that form the very magnets holding our wings together, we will not soar. Instead, we will plummet.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. I look forward to supporting further actions that prioritize American capability, security, and ingenuity.

Respectfully submitted,  
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### **Biography – Robert Anderson**

Robert Anderson (known in national security and technical circles as 'Ghost') is the founder and president of Blue Stone Delta, a strategic advisory firm working with companies across advanced manufacturing, space systems, blockchain, photonics, and national security technology. He has worked with federal agencies, defense contractors, and emerging startups to help align innovation with critical mineral access and industrial resilience. Robert's background includes technical work in satellite control and RF systems, support roles in national laboratories, and participation in secure policy environments involving spaceport development and strategic materials planning. He has been a trusted voice in both public and private sector forums focused on critical supply chains.