



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

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## Opening Statement

**Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)**

Full Committee Hearing:

*The Role of Federal Research in Establishing a Robust U.S. Supply Chain of Critical Minerals and Materials*

November 30, 2023

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Lucas, for holding this very important hearing. I thank the witnesses for being here today, including my very own district's Dr. Mulvaney. As you know, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee has played a leading role in addressing our needs for a sustainable supply of critical materials through contributions to the CHIPS and Science Act, and in particular through the Energy Act of 2020 – which guided much of the funding for these activities provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

As a nation, we are moving as quickly as possible to reach our goal of net-zero emissions to address the climate crisis. But to do that, we need to rapidly scale a broad suite of clean energy technologies that include, for example, the hydrogen electrolyzers supporting the regional hydrogen hub network, and the batteries used in many electric vehicles. However, several of these technologies are currently dependent on critical materials from nations that, unfortunately, are not always our friends.

Thanks in no small part to our recent bipartisan legislative efforts, we've started on the path to addressing the climate crisis and enabling our clean energy future. But that future is threatened, and our progress may well be halted if we do not have a sustainable supply of critical materials to build these technologies. To that end, I am encouraged by the progress that the Department of Energy has made to identify the specific materials threatening our clean energy supply chains. And I'm particularly happy to see the Department's promotion of research into innovative solutions to improve manufacturing efficiency, recycling, and the use of more abundant alternatives that can significantly reduce our need for these materials going forward. These efforts show that we can protect the environment and strengthen our economy at the same time – there is no good reason for our nation to make a false choice here.

I also applaud recent announcements from the national labs that have been hard at work researching domestic sources of critical minerals. Just this week, an analysis conducted by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory found that California's Salton Sea has significant potential as a domestic source of lithium – with enough of this critical mineral to support 375 million batteries for electric vehicles.

The bottom line is that we must continue to work diligently towards securing a sustainable supply of the materials we'll need to tackle the climate crisis head-on. But at the same time, all of the communities that we serve certainly deserve to live in safe and healthy environments, and this hearing is a good step towards striking that balance. As we move forward to develop domestic supplies, we need to be mindful of the impact on communities and how those impacts can be reduced or eliminated.

I look forward to today's conversation, and thank the witnesses again for being here today. I yield back.