

Coffman Continues Push for Rare Earth Metals
Introduces Bill to Help Restart Domestic Production

(WASHINGTON) – Congressman Mike Coffman (R-CO) today introduced legislation that would help reestablish a competitive rare earth domestic supply chain as part of his ongoing effort to avert a rare earth supply crisis in the United States.

There are 17 rare earth minerals that are used in many advanced technologies, from computers to precision guided munitions to components necessary for the production of renewable energies. They are dispersed widely around the earth's crust but rarely in concentrations that are commercially viable.

“With 97% of the world's supply of rare earth metals, China has proven to be an unreliable trading partner. Not only has their government ordered a reduction in exports of rare earth metals but they have used their near monopoly status as leverage on unrelated issues,” said Coffman.

Coffman's Rare Earth Policy Task Force and Materials Act requires the Department of the Interior to establish a government-wide task force to review and report back on all U.S. laws, regulations or policies that discourage the reestablishment of a domestic rare earth industry.

It also calls for a comprehensive plan for research, development, demonstration, and commercial application to ensure the long-term, secure, and sustainable supply of rare earth materials for the United States. In addition, the plan includes proposals on how to promote recycling possibilities and alternative materials that could act as substitutes. The measure is also part of Coffman's RESTART Act of 2011, which was introduced earlier this year.

“There is simply no reason to be almost 100 percent reliant on China for rare earth metals when we have such abundant resources here at home,” said Coffman.