



United States Senate Committee on
Energy & Natural Resources



Senator Lisa Murkowski, Alaska, *Ranking Member*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 15, 2011

CONTACT: ROBERT DILLON (202) 224-6977
MEGAN HERMANN (202) 224-7875

Sen. Murkowski Seeks Comments on Draft Legislation to Address Nation's Critical Minerals Supply Chain

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, today released a discussion draft of legislation designed to revitalize the nation's critical minerals supply chain. Murkowski is asking for public comments on the draft by May 6.

"Minerals are the building blocks of our economy," said Murkowski, ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. "From rare earth elements to molybdenum, we rely on minerals for everything from the smallest computer chips to the tallest skyscrapers. This draft bill provides clear, programmatic direction to keep us competitive with foreign nations and promote a stable supply of critical minerals."

The draft legislation directs the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to establish a list of minerals critical to the U.S. economy and sets out a comprehensive set of policies to ensure the nation is able to meet its own mineral needs.

"With so much attention paid to our reliance on foreign oil, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that other minerals are also critical to our economy. This legislation would modernize our mineral policies to bolster domestic production, protect the environment, expand manufacturing and promote recycling," Murkowski said. "Every one of these areas offers significant opportunities for job creation."

The discussion draft includes provisions related to:

- **DESIGNATIONS** – creates a process for designating minerals as critical based upon a review of potential supply restrictions and the importance of their use.
- **POLICY** – articulates a statement of policy regarding presidential leadership on the critical minerals supply chain.
- **RESOURCES** – seeks an updated assessment of critical mineral resources located in the United States, in coordination with state geologic surveys.
- **PERMITTING** – establishes a working group to review permitting, quantify delays, assess environmental protections and recommend improvements.
- **MANUFACTURING** – facilitates memoranda of agreement between states and the federal government on coordinated permitting for manufacturing facilities.

- **RECYCLING AND ALTERNATIVES** – authorizes research to promote the efficient use and recycling of critical minerals as well as alternatives to them.
- **ANALYSIS AND FORECASTING** – builds upon existing capabilities to provide more forward-looking analyses of critical mineral supply chain trends.
- **EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE** – provides workforce assessments, curriculum development, worker training and associated grant authorizations.
- **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION** – reaffirms interagency coordination to share critical mineral information and practices via diplomatic channels.

“It’s my hope that a transparent and inclusive process – designed to gather feedback from stakeholders even prior to the bill’s introduction – will lead to a common-sense bill that draws broad, bipartisan support,” Murkowski said.

Instructions for submitting comments: Comments on the draft should be submitted with a one-page summary to critical_minerals@energy.senate.gov by 4 p.m. on May 6. Both general and specific comments are welcomed, as well as suggested edits to the legislative text itself. Charts, graphics or additional legislative language may also be submitted. Contact Colin Hayes at (202) 224-4971 with any questions about the draft.

The text of the discussion draft and the comment form are attached.

###

*For further information, please contact Robert Dillon at 202.224.6977 or robert_dillon@energy.senate.gov or Megan Hermann at 202.224.7875 or megan_hermann@energy.senate.gov.
Visit our website at <http://energy.senate.gov/public/>*