

The STRATA Act

The Strategic Technology and Resilient Alliances Act

Introduced by Senator Coons and Senator Sheehy

There is strong momentum both in Congress and the Admin to counter China's dominance in and weaponization of critical minerals, essential inputs for advanced technologies, energy infrastructure, and defense systems. Current executive actions focus largely on expanding traditional mining and processing capacity. That is a necessary approach, but one that takes years, often decades. Beyond the timing challenge, expanding traditional mining and processing alone is unlikely to overcome the scale of China's dominance, which spans the entire critical minerals ecosystem.

To complement these efforts, the U.S. should pursue a strategy that builds on its greatest competitive advantage: innovation. Rather than attempting to out-mine or out-process China, the U.S. should accelerate breakthroughs in advanced extraction and processing technologies, mineral substitution, recovery from waste streams, recycling, and materials science. These innovations can deliver new sources of critical minerals more quickly, reduce dependence on vulnerable supply chains, and create enduring technological advantages over strategic competitors.

The U.S. does not need to pursue this strategy alone. Many of its closest allies possess world-leading expertise in mineral processing, refining, separation technologies, advanced manufacturing, and materials engineering. Combining U.S. strengths in research, entrepreneurship, and commercialization with allied industrial capabilities would accelerate technology development, reduce duplication, and build resilient supply chains that no single country could establish independently. Establishing formal bilateral and multilateral mechanisms for cooperation with key allied partners in critical minerals innovation enables sustained collaboration of governments, national labs and academic institutions, harnesses the strength of public-private financing, and will enable the growth of an innovation ecosystem which addresses the need for more critical minerals free from PRC's interference.

The STRATA Act—

- **Establishes a Critical Minerals Innovation Partnership Program**, housed within the State Department's Undersecretary of Economic Affairs, responsible for aligning U.S. and allied country strategies, governing shared innovation programs, and entering into technical assistance contracts and grants with participating entities (academic institutions, nonprofits, federally funded research and development centers, and industry partners);
- **Creates International Centers of Excellence**, housed at academic institutions, to build durable technical capacity and long-standing partnerships across the critical minerals value chain;
- **Launches a digital platform** to serve as a clearinghouse for solicitations, identify priority capability areas, enable U.S. entities to apply for participation funding, engage start-ups through codified pathways, and match applicants to existing innovation efforts;
- **Coordinates across the U.S. innovation architecture** by designating the Program Director of STRATA as liaison to the National Science and Technology Council's Subcommittee on International Science and Technology Coordination, with a direct pathway to the National Defense Technology and Industrial Base Council (under DoD).