

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 17, 2025

Secretary Pete Hegseth
Secretary of War
U.S. Department of War
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

We write to commend your efforts to restore our domestic critical minerals supply chain and strengthen our defense industrial base. The Department of War's (DoW) focus on rare earth minerals demonstrates your commitment to addressing key supply chain vulnerabilities. We strongly encourage you to take actions to support the development of a secure, reliable domestic lithium supply as it is another material essential to our national security.

As you know, Lithium is foundational to a wide range of defense technologies like advanced weapons systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, and battlefield energy storage. Yet the United States currently produces only about one percent of the world's lithium, while Communist China overwhelmingly dominates global production and processing. China's recent lithium export restrictions on lithium are furthering solidifying this market dominance.

Fortunately, there is a domestic alternative. The Smackover brine aquifer in southwest Arkansas and east Texas is the highest-grade lithium brine resource in North America and has emerged as the most promising region to significantly contribute to domestic lithium needs over the next five to twenty years. Standard Lithium Ltd. (SLI) has the most advanced lithium projects in both the Arkansas and Texas Smackover region and the only proven direct lithium extraction (DLE) technology and operations team in the United States. Further, this will lead to move development from other companies that have chosen to operate in the Smackover region.

Despite this good news, aspiring domestic lithium producers face serious headwinds from Communist China. To counter this, DoW should consider employing additional tools to bolster the U.S. lithium industry, including use of Defense Production Act Title III. This sends a clear signal to market participants that it's worthwhile to invest in our domestic capacity, and by taking this necessary step, we could significantly reduce our dependence on Communist China for lithium. A resilient domestic lithium supply will shield our military from supply chain disruptions, geopolitical manipulation, and other external threats. This is not a corporate subsidy; it is a national security investment to detangle our supply chains from Communist China.

We look forward to continuing our work together on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Tom Cotton
United States Senator

John Boozman
United States Senator

John Cornyn
United States Senator