



ALASKA MINERS ASSOCIATION

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Testimony: HRES House Resources Committee HB177: Critical and Essential Minerals January 17, 2024

Good afternoon. My name is Deantha Skibinski, and I am Executive Director of the Alaska Miners Association. AMA is a membership association that represents all aspects of Alaska's mining industry: large hardrock and coal mines, mining exploration and development projects, small family placer mines, industrial gravel and rock, and the vendors and contractors that support mines across the state.

AMA wishes to express support for the intent of the bill and offer suggestions for improvement.

First, we wish to express our gratitude that the bill sponsor and this committee have prioritized conversations that highlight the critical and essential minerals on which our society is dependent. Unfortunately the majority of these minerals are currently sourced from foreign nations with adversarial relationships and unacceptable environmental and social values. This bill directs Alaska's government to assess the potential of sourcing many of these minerals here in our state, and identify strategies that attract the investment we need to do so. Passage of legislation with these directives would send a powerful message to investors that the State of Alaska is jurisdiction of choice in which to invest.

We would suggest that to improve this bill you would remove references to the "global energy transition" as it describes an unrealistic pivot from fossil fueled energy generation. While the pursuit of renewable energies, and the underlying increased need for mining and the minerals it produces, is needed to meet global energy demands - it is abundantly clear that relying on **only** renewable energy is not a reality for Alaska or the world. Solar panels and wind turbines are important supplements to base energy needs, but even with battery storage technology they cannot power a community for days or weeks. Only diverse sources of energy, including reliable and dispatchable fossil fuels, will bring affordable and dependable heat and power to Alaska's residents and businesses. We suggest the word "expansion" could instead be used to communicate the goals in discussion.

HB177 outlines how Alaska's mining industry should play a role in helping provide the essential minerals that the world needs today to develop alternative energy technology. We all know that mining is done better here, where our regulatory requirements ensure worker safety and excellent environmental performance.

Thank you for hearing this bill and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions or provide any additional information.