

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 23, 2022

Honorable Anthony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Honorable Lloyd Austin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20240

Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretaries Blinken, Austin, Haaland, Raimondo, and Granholm:

A secure critical mineral supply chain, un-reliant on adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party, is essential to national and economic security. It is widely understood that the United States must cooperate with Five Eyes, Quad, and National Technology and Industrial Base countries to “ally-shore” critical mineral supply chains and develop technologies. To this end, the previous Administration announced the U.S.-Canada Joint Action Plan for Critical Minerals Cooperation (Action Plan) in January 2020. We applaud the spirit of the initiative, however, the Action Plan document is an “internal” document, not available to the public. As a result, working group and sub-working group engagements, initiatives, and potential developments have been opaque to the American people and U.S. Congress. Therefore, we are requesting a briefing on all previous and forthcoming engagements of the Action Plan working group and sub-groups.

In February 2021, President Biden announced agreement to “strengthen” the Action Plan. Since then, it has been reported that Secretary Raimondo and other federal officials have agreed to meet quarterly with Canadian counterparts to discuss supply chains, including critical minerals. Concerningly, the Canadian mining company Neo Lithium Corp has recently been acquired by Chinese state-owned firm Zijin Mining Group Ltd. This deal required review and consent from the Canadian government. The acquisition by the Chinese Communist Party of a Canadian critical mineral mining company with an existing lithium project in South America is highly concerning and raises a litany of questions regarding United States and Canadian understanding of the threat imposed by the Chinese Communist Party. The Canadian government’s complicit approval also raises questions regarding the extent of cooperation with the United States in

accordance with the Action Plan, including whether the United States government was aware or notified of the pending transaction.

We understand that at a minimum, the Action Plan is intended to spark collaboration for sharing information and analysis, and to promote overall coordination in the interest of securing the U.S.-Canada supply chain for critical minerals. This interagency effort is intended to include industry across a broad range of strategic sectors. We would expect the working group or sub-groups to consider acquisition strategies, information sharing, monitoring foreign ownership and control of industry investments (including downstream), identifying data gaps, prioritizing minerals with disruption vulnerabilities and greatest demand, project financing, licensing and rights agreements, processing agreements, and minority shareholdings considerations.

We are requesting a briefing regarding previous Action Plan working group engagements, initiatives, dialogues, recommendations, and information. We also seek all plans for the “strengthened” Action Plan. Additionally, we ask that any notification or communication between the Canadian government and United States agencies regarding the Neo Lithium acquisition be provided in the brief, plus a legal justification for the United States not conducting a formal review of the transaction, and transcripts from Secretary Raimondo’s November meetings with Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne. If any information to be covered in such brief is classified, we will accommodate a secure space at the Capitol for the discussion.

Thank you for accommodating our request. Please contact Walker Barrett (walker.barrett@mail.house.gov) on Rep Michael Waltz’s staff with questions.



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress



Lance Gooden
Member of Congress