



April 24, 2026

The Honorable Pete Stauber  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral  
Resources  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Yassamin Ansari  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral  
Resources  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Stauber and Ranking Member Ansari:

On behalf of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, I write to highlight the economic and national security risks posed by a looming copper shortfall and to propose common sense recommendations for developing a more resilient U.S. copper supply chain. Copper is foundational to our nation's ability to build and maintain critical infrastructure, support advanced manufacturing, and meet rapidly expanding demand driven by electrification and emerging technologies.

The U.S. economy relies on copper for critical applications in areas such as defense, infrastructure, and emerging technologies. It is a vital component in military equipment ranging from communications systems to fighter jets that helps ensure our operational readiness and effectiveness. Copper is also essential to enhancing and expanding our electrical grid to meet growing demand throughout the U.S. economy from manufacturing, data centers, transportation, energy systems, and more.

The United States, however, remains overly reliant on foreign supply, increasing vulnerability to supply disruptions and geopolitical risk, and constraining investment and long-term planning for U.S. manufacturers and project developers. The Chamber supports a pragmatic, holistic approach that strengthens domestic production and processing while also deepening cooperation with allies and trading partners. We offer the following recommendations for your consideration:

- 1. Facilitate permitting reform for domestic mining and processing.**  
Streamlining the permitting process for mining and minerals processing projects is essential to fostering domestic copper production. We support reforms that expedite approvals and reduce regulatory bottlenecks to increase

regulatory certainty and enable timely investment in U.S. projects. The Trump Administration has directed agencies to identify priority projects that can be immediately approved, or for which permits can be immediately issued. As coordinating agencies act expediently on this directive our copper supply chain will be strengthened.

**2. Support innovation, technology, and workforce development.**

Domestic mining companies would benefit from grants and tax credits to invest in research and development that increases production at existing mines and stockpiles. Workforce constraints are also a growing challenge for the mining sector, so targeted support for training and trade schools can help address shortages and strengthen the long-term talent pipeline.

**3. Strengthen domestic processing and smelting capacity.**

Despite abundant copper reserves, the United States has a significant gap in smelting infrastructure. Much domestically mined copper concentrate is sent to China for smelting, and China's economies of scale allow it to process concentrate at low cost while also capturing ancillary benefits from the smelting process that can yield commercially useful quantities of other critical minerals. The Chamber encourages engagement with industry to explore tools that could improve the competitiveness and utilization of domestic processing assets, including consideration of price guarantees and offtake agreements where appropriate.

**4. Work with trusted partners to diversify supply and reduce concentration risk**

The Chamber supports strengthening supply chains through cooperation with allies and trading partners, including efforts that build resilient, non-distorted markets among aligned partners. Coordinated strategies that pool resources and optimize industrial capacity can help counter concentrated dominance in mining and, especially, processing.

Developing a resilient copper supply chain is essential to U.S. national security, infrastructure buildout, and long-term economic competitiveness. The Chamber urges the Committee to advance policies that expand domestic production and processing, streamline permitting, support workforce and innovation, and reinforce collaboration with trusted partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty Durbin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marty" and last name "Durbin" clearly legible.

Marty Durbin  
President, Global Energy Institute  
Senior Vice President, Policy  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce