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Administration looks to Defense Production Act for Critical Minerals

President Donald Trump signed an executive order invoking emergency powers to boost domestic production of critical minerals and reduce reliance on Chinese imports. The order utilizes several authorities, including the Cold War-era Defense Production Act, to accelerate the mining and processing of key materials such as uranium, copper, potash, and gold. This move aligns with the administration's broader strategy to strengthen U.S. mineral independence and enhance national security.

The order directs federal agencies to prioritize domestic mineral projects through streamlined permitting and financial incentives, including loans, capital investment, and technical assistance. It calls for collaboration between the Departments of Defense and Energy to fast-track mineral production and establish long-term leases for commercial mining operations. Additionally, the U.S. International Development Finance Corp. is tasked with supporting new mining projects through targeted financial backing. The Interior Department has also been instructed to prioritize mining on federal lands while proposing regulatory changes for handling waste material.

Supporters of the order view it as a crucial step in countering China's critical mineral dominance by combining regulatory relief with financial support. However, a debate about balancing resource security with environmental responsibility is likely to intensify as agencies implement the order.

Legislation we are watching

Repeal of the Death Tax Repeal Act - This bill eliminates the federal **estate tax**, which is commonly referred to as the "**death tax**." This tax applies to the transfer of a deceased person's assets to their heirs if the estate's total value exceeds a certain threshold.

So far, the bill sponsored by Congressman Randy Feenstra (R-IA), has attracted **162 cosponsors**. In the Senate, an identical effort led by Senator John Thune (R-SD) has secured **45 cosponsors**. These are strong numbers of supporters in

both Chambers, signaling significant support for passage either in the forthcoming reconciliation package or possibly as a stand-alone measure in the future.

Promoting Resilient Supply Chains Act of 2025 - The bill aims to strengthen U.S. supply chains by authorizing the Department of Commerce to establish a program that maps, monitors, and models critical industries and emerging technologies to prevent disruptions. It creates a Supply Chain Resilience Working Group to collaborate with private sector partners and government agencies, identifying vulnerabilities and preparing for potential supply chain shocks. The legislation also promotes domestic manufacturing and reduces reliance on foreign sources by leveraging advanced technologies like AI and quantum computing to enhance resilience and economic security.

The bill nearly passed Congress last year and was considered non-controversial but was derailed at the 11th hour after it was tied to other items in an end-of-the-year spending package.

Corporate Transparency Act

The Trump Administration has announced it will suspend enforcement of the Corporate Transparency Act (CTAs) beneficial ownership information (BOI) reporting requirements for U.S. citizens and domestic reporting companies, shifting the focus exclusively to foreign reporting companies.

The original intent of the bill was designed to help the Treasury Department uncover shell companies involved in offshore tax evasion. However, the legislation was widely criticized thanks to its broad reporting requirements imposing excessive burdens on small businesses while potentially violating privacy. Critics also raised concerns that the entities it was aimed at identifying would not comply with the rules.

This move, welcomed by small businesses and industry groups, delays or potentially stops the law's implementation, though fully overturning it would need Congress or a court ruling.

Support from Republicans for maintaining clean energy credits

A group of 21 House Republicans has reaffirmed their support for renewable energy tax credits, signaling a willingness to preserve some of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provisions. This is up from 18 who signed a similar letter last year. In the most recent correspondence to House Ways and Means Chair Jason Smith (R-MO), the lawmakers emphasized the importance of maintaining sector-wide energy tax incentives that support both traditional and renewable energy sources. Lawmakers cite the economic benefits of these credits, particularly in districts benefiting from clean energy investments. Despite this push, many GOP members remain focused on reducing overall spending, with budget reconciliation efforts targeting IRA subsidies as a major cost-saving measure.

As lawmakers proceed with the budget reconciliation process to preserve the 2017 Trump tax cuts and provide additional tax relief, the fate of these clean energy credits will be considered, but given the tight vote margins in the House of Representatives, vote counters in the Chamber are aware that can't lose any support from their Republican colleagues, and threading the needle between policy that helps their constituencies, and maintaining fiscal discipline will require additional negotiation.

Tariff Watch I - Canadian steel and aluminum

The Trump administration withdrew its threat to double tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum after Ontario agreed to drop its planned 25% surtax on U.S.-bound electricity, de-escalating tensions in an ongoing trade dispute. Ontario

Premier Doug Ford and U.S. Commerce Secretary Lutnick negotiated the resolution, with Ford stating the need to lower tensions and focus on trade stability.

President Trump has remained steadfast that tariffs are necessary to rebuild American manufacturing, however, many worry that the trade war could harm both the U.S. and Canadian economies.

Tariff Watch II - Reciprocal Tariffs

Kevin Hassett, director of the White House National Economic Council, revealed that President Trump will unveil a detailed reciprocal tariff plan on April 2, which may exempt over 100 countries with minimal trade barriers from new tariffs on their exports to the U.S. The plan targets approximately 10 to 15 countries responsible for the trillion-dollar U.S. trade deficit, which imposes significant tariffs and non-tariff barriers, though many are already offering concessions to avoid the forthcoming duties. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent noted that tariff rates will vary by country based on their trade barriers, with implementation set for April 2, despite initial hints of a negotiation period.

Tariff Watch III - Tariff Tracker

Thanks to the dedicated work of Congressional staffer, Mike Dankler, who works for Rep. Rudy Yakym (R-IN), we have provided a guide that organizes all of the recent announcements on tariffs from the Trump Administration.

Harmonized Tariff Threat Schedule				
Status	Who	What	Rate	Authority
In effect as of 2/4/25	China	All imports	20% (10% from 2/4/25-3/3/25)	IEEPA
In effect as of 3/4/25	Canada	Non-USMCA-compliant imports	25%	IEEPA
In effect as of 3/4/25	Mexico	Non-USMCA-compliant imports	25%	IEEPA
In effect as of 3/12/25	All countries	Steel products and derivatives	25%	Section 232
In effect as of 3/12/25	All countries	Aluminum products and derivatives	25% (was 10%)	Section 232
TBD (public hearing 3/24/25)	China	Ships servicing U.S. ports	A suite of fees of up to \$1.5 million	Section 301
Due 4/1/25	N/A	USTR report on various trade issues	N/A	America First Trade Policy Memorandum
Due 4/1/25	N/A	Commerce report on various trade issues	N/A	America First Trade Policy Memorandum
Due 4/1/25	N/A	Treasury report on various trade issues	N/A	America First Trade Policy Memorandum

TBD (comments due 4/1/25)	All countries (probably)	Copper, scrap copper, and derivative products	TBD	Section 232
TBD (comments due 4/1/25)	All countries (probably)	Timber, lumber, and derivative products	TBD	Section 232
Scheduled 4/2/25ish	Canada	USMCA-compliant imports	25%	IEEPA
Scheduled 4/2/25ish	Mexico	USMCA-compliant imports	25%	IEEPA
Threatened 4/2/25	We'll see	Reciprocal tariffs	Variable	Many
Threatened 4/2/25	European Union	TBD	25% (maybe)	TBD
Threatened 4/2/25	TBD	Autos	TBD	TBD
Threatened 4/2/25	TBD	Pharmaceuticals	TBD	TBD
Threatened 4/2/25	TBD	Chips	TBD	TBD
Due 4/30/25	N/A	OMB report on foreign impacts on federal procurement	N/A	America First Trade Policy Memorandum
Due 5/10/25	All countries	Inclusion process for steel derivatives	25%	Section 232
Due 5/10/25	All countries	Inclusion process for aluminum derivatives	25%	Section 232
TBD (public hearing was 3/11/25)	China	Semiconductors	TBD	Section 301

Thank you for staying engaged with our advocacy efforts and feel free to reach out to Bud DeFlaviis ([Bud@NAED.org](mailto: Bud@NAED.org)) or Ed Orlet ([EOrlet@NAED.org](mailto: EOrlet@NAED.org)) directly with any questions or comments.