

AASG

The Association of American State Geologists (AASG) represents the State Geologists of the 50 United States and Puerto Rico. Founded in 1908, AASG seeks to advance the science and practical application of geology and related earth sciences in the United States and its territories, commonwealths, and possessions.

Position Statement

AASG strongly supports adequate funding of mineral-resource programs within relevant Federal agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Interior, and Labor. Further, AASG advocates that, as appropriate, these programs be implemented through Federal-State partnerships to achieve mutually beneficial goals relative to mineral resources.

Background

The United States is a major consumer of nearly every class of natural materials, such as energy resources (oil, gas, coal, uranium, geothermal fluids, etc.), forest and agricultural products, and nonfuel mineral resources. Nonfuel mineral resources include more than 100 commodities used in all facets of modern society, from construction of our homes, businesses, and infrastructure, to manufacture of vehicles, computers, satellites, and fertilizers that support our farm economy.

Mineral resources are quarried or mined in every state in the U.S. Crushed stone, sand, and gravel, needed for concrete and asphalt, are widely distributed, but many other commodities have been concentrated by geological processes and occur only in certain locations. Locally, social or political factors prevent some mineral resources from being mined. With its large land area and diverse geologic settings, the U.S. has many key mineral resources needed for society to function, including metals and construction raw materials. Some commodities, such as aluminum and tungsten, are not currently mined in the U.S. because economically more favorable deposits in other parts of the world are able to meet the global demand.

Along with other natural-resource industries, mining adds wealth to local, state, national, and global economies. China and the U.S. are significant producers of 18 of the 22 key mineral commodities listed in the table below.

Statistics on Selected Mineral Resources (source: USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries, 2011).

Commodity	U.S. Import Reliance (% of U.S. consumption)	Leading Producers (% of world mine production in 2010)
Aluminum ore	100	Australia (33%), China (19%), Brazil (15%)
Manganese	100	China (22%), Australia (18%), South Africa (17%)
Rare earths	100	China (97%), India (2%), Brazil (0.4%)
Platinum	94	South Africa (75%), Russia (13%), Zimbabwe (5%)
Potash	83	Canada (29%), Russia (21%), Belarus (15%)
Zinc	77	China (29%), Peru (13%), Australia (12%)
Barite	76	China (52%), India (14%), U.S. (10%)
Tin	69	China (44%), Indonesia (23%), Peru (15%)
Tungsten	68	China (85%), Russia (4%), Bolivia (2%)
Silver	65	Peru (18%), Mexico (16%), China (14%)
Chromium	56	South Africa (39%), India (17%), Kazakhstan (15%)
Beryllium	47	U.S. (89%), China (11%), Mozambique (1%)
Lithium	43	Chile (34%), Australia (33%), China (18%)
Nickel	43	Russia (17%), Indonesia (15%), Philippines (10%)
Gold	33	China (14%), Australia (10%), U.S. (9%)
Copper	30	Chile (34%), Peru (8%), China (7%), U.S. (7%)
Gypsum	15	China (31%), Iran (9%), Spain (8%)
Phosphate rock	15	China (37%), U.S. (15%), Morocco (15%)
Cement	8	China (55%), India (7%), U.S. (2%)
Iron ore	U.S. is exporter	China (38%), Australia (18%), Brazil (15%)
Molybdenum	U.S. is exporter	China (40%), U.S. (24%), Chile (17%)
Diatomite	U.S. is exporter	U.S. (30%), China (25%), Denmark (12%)



Gold (3.3 cm high, Round Mountain Mine).
Photo by Jeff Scovil, courtesy
Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology.

