

# House Concurrent Resolution No. 48

## 96TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES SCHATZ (Sponsor), POLLOCK, KORMAN, HINSON, SMITH (150), HIGDON, NETH, HOUGHTON, PHILLIPS, STREAM, COOKSON, BERRY, WHITE, DAVIS, WIELAND, McCAHERTY, BARNES, REIBOLDT, REDMON, CURTMAN, FITZWATER, ASBURY, KLIPPENSTEIN, JOHNSON, ENTLICHER, LICHTENEGGER, DAY, FREDERICK, LONG, CROSS, CAUTHORN, WALLINGFORD, DENISON, SHUMAKE, DIECKHAUS, SCHIEFFER, HOLSMAN, HARRIS, BLACK, FALLERT AND McDONALD (Co-sponsors).

1763L.011

2       **WHEREAS**, the United States and the world find themselves dependent upon China for  
3 a group of minerals and metals known as "Rare Earth Elements" that are critical to many  
4 commercial, environmental, and defense applications; and

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5       **WHEREAS**, rare earth elements represent the only known bridge to the next level of  
6 improved performance in the material properties for many metallurgical alloys, electrical  
7 conductivity, radio active shielding, and instrument sensitivity; and

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9       **WHEREAS**, thorium is a naturally occurring companion element to the rare earth  
10 elements which can be extracted as a byproduct of rare earth mining at no additional expense and  
11 without creating additional mining waste; and

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13       **WHEREAS**, thorium can be used as fuel in a nuclear power plant because it is a slightly  
14 radioactive metal and is 550 times more abundant than Uranium 235 needed for nuclear power;  
15 and

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17       **WHEREAS**, thorium is generally considered harmless except through extreme long-term  
18 exposure or unless it is inhaled as a very fine dust; and

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20       **WHEREAS**, thorium emits alpha rays which have no penetrating strength and cannot  
21 pass through human skin or thin plastic film; and

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23       **WHEREAS**, thorium emits less radiation than sun light, radon from a gas stove top,  
24 potassium in a banana, X-rays, frequent air travel, and TSA full body scans; and

25       **WHEREAS**, the United States has two permitted world class rare earth mines - the Pea  
26 Ridge Mine in Washington County, Missouri, and the Mountain Pass Mine in California; and  
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28       **WHEREAS**, Missouri's Pea Ridge Mine has all 17 of the recoverable rare earth elements  
29 and is the only permitted heavy rare earth mine outside of China. The Mountain Pass Mine only  
30 has 8 of the 17 recoverable rare earth elements and cannot produce rare earths; and  
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32       **WHEREAS**, the United States has no refining facilities to process the rare earths from  
33 the Pea Ridge Mine or manage the thorium byproduct; and  
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35       **WHEREAS**, a thorium-fueled nuclear reactor generates hundreds of times the power as  
36 a uranium or coal plant, but produces essentially no waste. A thorium plant would produce less  
37 than 1% of the waste that a uranium plant produces and produces no carbon or greenhouse gases,  
38 unlike coal plants; and  
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40       **WHEREAS**, while the waste of a uranium power plant is toxic for more than 10,000  
41 years, the little waste that is produced by a thorium power plant is benign in less than 200 years;  
42 and  
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44       **WHEREAS**, a thorium power plant can be used to burn our current stockpile of nuclear  
45 waste. In addition, thorium power plants cannot "melt down", thorium cannot practically be used  
46 to make nuclear weapons, thorium does not require any enrichment for energy use, and there is  
47 enough thorium in the United States alone to power the country at its current energy level for  
48 more than 10,000 years; and  
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50       **WHEREAS**, a thorium power plant can tap right in at the source of a current coal or  
51 uranium power plant without the need for laying a new grid; and  
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53       **WHEREAS**, through the development of a centralized rare earth-thorium facility, all  
54 thorium waste products can be managed and controlled in an environmentally safe manner; and  
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56       **WHEREAS**, China's monopoly on production of rare earth elements is posed to capture  
57 emerging technologies and manufacturing facilities from around the world, in exchange for  
58 supply contracts; and  
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60           **WHEREAS**, absent any new production, Asia will soon consume 100% of the world's  
61 production of rare earth elements; and

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63           **WHEREAS**, China's National Industrial Policy of Rare Earth Dominance cannot be  
64 challenged by private investment. The United States must develop a National Domestic Rare  
65 Earth Refinery to survive; and

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67           **WHEREAS**, unless the United States Congress makes changes, our rare earths will be  
68 sent to China for processing and they will not come back for use in the United States; and

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70           **WHEREAS**, with its Pea Ridge Mine, Missouri can become the exclusive producer of  
71 heavy rare earths in the United States and attract new high tech companies from around the  
72 world:

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74           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the House of  
75 Representatives of the Ninety-sixth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate  
76 concurring therein, hereby:

77           (1) Strongly support the development of thorium energy and the Pea Ridge Mine in  
78 Washington County, Missouri, in its efforts to extract thorium as a byproduct of rare earth  
79 element mining; and

80           (2) Strongly urge the United States Congress to support the use of thorium as a safe,  
81 efficient fuel source by taking the necessary steps to allow the Pea Ridge Mine in Missouri to  
82 extract thorium as a byproduct of rare earth elements mining and for the development of the  
83 refineries necessary to support thorium power plants; and

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85           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of  
86 Representatives be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the  
87 Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Congress and each member of the Missouri  
88 Congressional delegation.

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