



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2510</b>		DATE: <b>3/3/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Higher Education and Workforce Development</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>BYRON KEELIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-402-0655</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>FREEDOM PRINCIPLE</b>		TITLE: <b>PRESIDENT</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 2</b>			
CITY: <b>BALLWIN</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63022</b>
EMAIL: <b>freedomprinciplemo@protonmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 6:30 AM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

The Freedom Principle strongly support HB 2510 because our national security and economic future depend on a secure, domestic supply of critical minerals. Rogue nations like China, Russia, and other anti-American countries currently dominate global mineral supply chains, leaving the United States vulnerable to sudden disruptions, coercion, and resource weaponization. By establishing a comprehensive program to map, develop, and process critical minerals in Missouri, this bill ensures we are not beholden to foreign adversaries for the foundational materials that power our defense, aerospace, energy, and technology sectors. HB 2510 creates jobs, cultivates innovation partnerships, and strengthens local industries, all while safeguarding against the risks posed by those who wish America harm. For the sake of our national interest and future prosperity, I urge the swift passage of this essential legislation.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>CHANCE HEPOLA</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI CHAMBER</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: <b>MO</b>
EMAIL:		ZIP:
ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DAVID TREMAIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 7:08 PM</b>	

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Thank you representative Steinmeyer, this bill like many others before, on the same subject: "To help manage a heavy rare earths and thorium supply by guaranteeing there separation becomes an asset, no longer viewing thorium as a liability."

Passage of HB 2510 will supply MURR.....Missouri University Research Reactor as it processes thorium isotopes for cancer targeting therapy. MO S&T is also, so integral to this legislation due to the University's Protoplex capability reaching maximum heavy rare earths separation purity to 99.9%. A vertically integrated domestic supply chain management cooperation, finally being recognized by the MO legislature, will bring success to Missouri employment especially in the area of materials science and manufacturing sector. As the Federal government so too, is taking actions; primarily to secure a critical strategic reserve. it is my hopes that Missouri, would help usher in a major achievement in the last 50 years for the coordination of critical minerals and future energy needs, allowing MO to be at the hub or critical minerals crossroads for the USA.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>GREGORY L HEMPEN</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-608-5843</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>ECOBLAST, LC</b>		TITLE: <b>OWNER, ECOBLAST, LC</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>56 MONTAGUE CT</b>			
CITY: <b>SAINT LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63123</b>
EMAIL: <b>hempen69@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 11:18 AM</b>	

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I, Gregory L. Hempen, as the owner of EcoBlast, LC (a geological consulting business), am a proponent of HB 2510. The bill is a far-sighted, well-developed means of providing a variety of benefits for Missouri's workforce and industry, and the important, continued, state and national strategic mineral acquisition. The bill properly recognizes the Missouri Geological Survey (MGS) for its past work in critical mineral exploration and how MGS will provide an important role in assessing and distributing critical mineral information. I heartily support HB 2510 as presently written. I would suggest that the bill's definitions of critical minerals be aligned with the definitions provided by the US Geological Survey to avoid any misinterpretation of the bill's intent.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 11:43 PM</b>
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**I am Opposed to this Bill and growing Government with two (2) New Full-Time Employees and \$300,000 in additional expenditures. This a a task to be done by private enterprises.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SARAH BERRY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/26/2026 10:53 AM</b>	

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**HB 2510 presents several foreseeable constitutional vulnerabilities under the Missouri Constitution.**

**1. Public Purpose Risk (Mo. Const. Art. III §38(a))**

The bill authorizes direct grants and targeted incentives to private mining, processing, and manufacturing entities. The statute does not embed measurable statutory standards, funding caps, or mandatory performance safeguards.

This creates exposure to taxpayer standing challenges alleging predominant private benefit.

**2. Delegation Concerns (Mo. Const. Art. II §1)**

The Act grants broad discretion to executive agencies to determine eligibility criteria, award amounts, and incentive structure without defined statutory limits or formulas. Missouri permits delegation, but only where reasonably definite standards exist. The breadth of discretion presents a foreseeable nondelegation challenge.

**3. Special Law Exposure (Mo. Const. Art. III §40)**

Although facially general, the “targeted” incentive structure could operate as a de facto special law if administered selectively or geographically concentrated.

**4. Dynamic Federal Incorporation**

The statute incorporates federal “critical mineral” determinations. If interpreted as automatic future adoption of federal agency decisions, this raises separation-of-powers concerns under Missouri law.

**Summary Classification:**

**Not facially unconstitutional.**

**Legally vulnerable in administration, particularly under public-purpose and delegation doctrines.**

**Foreseeable taxpayer standing litigation upon appropriation or disbursement of funds.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>MAXINE GILL</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI COALITION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</b>		TITLE: <b>POLICY COORDINATOR</b>
ADDRESS: <b>725 KINGSLAND AVENUE, STE. 100</b>		
CITY: <b>UNIVERSITY CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>63130</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MELISSA VATTEROTT</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-727-0600</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI COALITION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</b>		TITLE: <b>DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND STRATEGY</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>725 KINGSLAND AVENUE</b>			
CITY: <b>UNIVERSITY CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63130</b>
EMAIL: <b>mvatterott@moenvironment.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 10:27 AM</b>	
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March 3, 2026

Chairman Chris Brown  
 Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development  
 201 W. Capitol Ave., Rm. 302-1  
 Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Chairman Brown and Members of the Committee,

The Missouri Coalition for the Environment is a statewide advocacy nonprofit organization that works to empower Missourians to protect their environment and health. HB 2510 seeks to task the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED) with respectively determining Missouri’s capacity to build out a critical mineral supply chain and issue grants to eligible entities to build or expand existing supply chain infrastructure. The desire for this bill is to decrease our state’s and nation’s reliance on such materials extracted from other countries. Missouri is fortunate that we have reserves of certain critical minerals, particularly cobalt, that are of interest to diversifying our energy portfolio through the creation of batteries for energy storage, wind turbines, and solar panels as well as of interest to other national defense matters. REEs are important for high tech devices such as phones, cameras, laptops and solar panels. At the same time, these minerals are carcinogenic and the extraction process can release acids, heavy metals, and radioactive materials into our environment. If the Missouri Legislature is going to incentivize extraction, production or manufacturing of these materials, then we must adequately protect those who live near and around the sites where these materials are extracted, refined, and used in manufacturing and recycling. As such, MCE urges this committee to amend HB 2510 to include the needed framework outlined in HB 2737, sponsored by Representative Eric Woods.

Why does Missouri need a new framework for these particular minerals? We do not have an existing regulatory framework that governs these minerals or requires protections to handle extraction of carcinogenic and radioactive materials. These minerals currently come mostly from China and the Congo, countries that do not have good track records for human health or environmental protections. We must learn from the impacts of Doe Run’s lead operations on children and families in southeast

Missouri and ensure that adequate protections are in place and enforced around extraction and processing of dangerous minerals. We can also look at the ongoing health crisis in St. Louis County where the radioactive and hazardous materials from the creation of the Atomic Bomb in the 1940s has led to thousands of individuals living and playing in proximity to the processing and storage sites of uranium to be diagnosed with rare cancers and other diseases at disproportionate rates.

MCE is most concerned about the health and environmental impacts of three minerals: cobalt, Rare Earth Elements (REEs), and silica sand. Cobalt and REEs are important for high tech devices such as phones and laptops and for some renewable energy infrastructure such as electric vehicle batteries and wind turbines. The mining of cobalt and REEs also pose significant environmental and health impacts for current and future generations of Missourians. Silica sand, also known as “fracking sand” is predominantly used in the hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” of natural gas. Silica sand mining has impacts on our health and environment and only furthers our reliance on fossil fuels, the burning of which contributes to increased extreme weather events. Crystalline silicon is also needed for renewable energy infrastructure such as solar panels. Missouri should prioritize mining crystalline silicon for renewable energy infrastructure only after Missouri has a framework to protect Missouri communities from public health and environmental health risks associated with such mining and processing. Missouri needs increased government oversight of mining operations for these minerals, including requiring proposed mining operators to submit detailed environmental assessments of their proposed operations and to adopt preventative measures once in operation to minimize harm. Below I have outlined some of the most significant concerns with mining these minerals.

**Cobalt – Mining cobalt releases toxic particles that have the potential to cause an assortment of serious health ailments, including cancers, and lung, vision and male reproductive system harm. Cobalt particles from mining operations enter surface water, leading to degraded water quality and heightened levels of eutrophication. Continued engagement by residents of Fredericktown and surrounding communities with local and state elected officials about the harms from lack of protections surrounding cobalt mines and related battery plants has evidenced that Missourians do not want these operations near their homes, schools, waterways, or public lands.**

**Rare Earth Elements (REEs) – Processing REEs involves the separation and removal of uranium and thorium, which results in radioactive wastes. Inhalation of REE gasses can cause lung embolisms, especially with long-term exposure. This concern with inhalation of REE gasses is particularly concerning from yttrium, which is the REE believed to be most prominent in Missouri. Yttrium can also cause lung cancer and damage to the liver. The wastewater discharge from mining yttrium is particularly concerning as it contains acids, radioactive elements, and heavy metals which have significant impacts on humans, fauna, and flora.**

**Silica sand or fracking sand – The mining, transport, processing, and use of silica sand in the fracking process for natural gas create the air pollutants particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) and respirable crystalline silica. Respirable crystalline silica can cause major problems when inhaled, including lung-related disease and kidney disease. Mining causes alteration of land structure due to excavation. Silica sand mines also cause interference with the land’s natural drainage, depletion of ground water sources, topsoil loss, degraded forestland, and harm to aquatic life in nearby waterways. The impacts are compounded by the harms from fracking natural gas. Studies have indicated that these gas and oil operations can lead to loss of habitat for animal and plant life, decline of species, disrupt animal migration which all leads to land degradation. They have also been associated with human health risks. Studies show associations between residential proximity to these mining operations and an increase in adverse effects such as risk of pregnancy effects, cancer, hospitalizations and asthma. Fracking operations that are located near marginalized communities disproportionately worsen the health and the environment of the individuals living there. The public outcry regarding the NexGen silica mine proposed in St. Genevieve County is evidence that Missourians do not want to be exposed to these operations.**

**In conclusion, Missouri Coalition for the Environment respectfully urges you to amend HB 2510 to include the necessary framework needed to protect the communities surrounding and downstream from mines from long term health harms that can occur if exposed to these important but dangerous minerals. Thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.**

**Sincerely,**

Melissa Vatterott, JD  
Director of Policy and Strategy  
Missouri Coalition for the Environment  
mvatterott@moenvironment.org  
(314) 727-0600, ext. 111

**Sources:**

Missouri HB 2737 (2026), <https://house.mo.gov/Bill.aspx?bill=HB2737&year=2026&code=R>.

North America's Largest Lead Producer to Spend \$65 Million to Correct Environmental Violations at Missouri Facilities, U.S. Department of Justice <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/north-america-s-largest-lead-producer-spend-65-million-correct-environmental-violations> (October 8, 2010).

See Historic Timeline of Toxic Waste in St. Louis, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, <https://moenvironment.org/blog/historic-timeline-of-toxic-waste-in-st-louis/> (November 23, 2023).

Hisan Farjana et al., Life cycle assessment of cobalt extraction process, 18, J. of Sustainable Mining 150, 150 (2019), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2300396018301836#>.

See Id. at 155.

Allison Kite, Missouri Independent, After Battery Plant Fire Southeast Missouri Town Alarmed About Potential Contamination, <https://missouriindependent.com/2025/02/17/after-battery-plant-fire-southeast-missouri-town-alarmed-about-potential-contamination/>. (Feb. 17, 2025).

Yttrium (Y) – Chemical properties, Health and Environmental effects, LennTech, <https://www.lenntech.com/periodic/elements/y.htm#ixzz7mFPEJVgT> (last visited March 13, 2024).

Health Effects of Particulate Matter and Silica Exposure, UW-Eau Claire, <https://www.uwec.edu/academics/college-arts-sciences/departments-programs/watershed-institute/explore-opportunities/sand-mining-research/impact-silica/health-effects/#> (last visited December 8, 2022).

Id.

Ashutosh Mishra, Impact of silica mining on environment, 8 J. Geography & Regional Plan., 150, 155-156, (2015), <https://academicjournals.org/journal/JGRP/article-full-text-pdf/915EC0C53587>.

Anna Lin-Schweitzer, Integrated effort needed to mitigate fracking while protecting both humans and the environment (2022), <https://ysph.yale.edu/news-article/integrated-effort-needed-to-mitigate-fracking-while-protecting-both-humans-and-the-environment/#>.

Id.

Id.

Id.

See Niara Savage, Missouri Independent, Fight over silica sand mine rekindles fears about Missouri's Old Lead Belt, <https://missouriindependent.com/2022/08/29/fight-over-silica-mine-rekindles-fears-about-missouris-old-lead-belt/> (August 29, 2022); Allison Kite, Missouri Independent, Proposed Missouri silica sand mine loses appeal of its denied permit, (October 17, 2023).

Please visit Missouri Coalition for the Environment's website to read our fact sheets and our detailed policy position on mining, as I only included excerpts that relate to the harms of certain minerals. Missouri Coalition for the Environment's 2024 Position on Mining, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, <https://moenvironment.org/blog/mining-policy-position/>.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MIMI GARSTANG</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
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I appreciate the committee’s attention to this very important issue. The wide range of geologic provinces in Missouri creates a high potential for critical mineral development in our state. The Missouri Geological Survey in the Missouri Department of Natural Resources has been a pioneer in mapping and evaluating this potential. This activity will facilitate readiness and wise decisions in support of the electronic, energy and security sectors. They appear to remain poised to collaborate with the U. S. Geological Survey and universities moving forward. I recommend clarification of all language that speaks to existing federal definitions and responsibilities as it relates to critical minerals. In order to successfully implement a program with this importance, it may be advantageous for the committee to consider extending the sunset date for a longer period of time.

**Mimi Garstang**  
 Retired Geologist, RG, CPG