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## **NCPA Study: U.S. Mining Policy Restricts Rare Earths Access American Defense and Electronics Are Dependent on Chinese Supplies**

DALLAS (May 16, 2012)— The U.S. could add jobs and strengthen national security by developing rare earth mining domestically and in other countries to break China's 97% monopoly on the global supply of these critical minerals, according to a [new report](#) from the National Center for Policy Analysis ([NCPA](#)).

Rare earth deposits exist all over the globe but China is the only country that is actively mining and exporting any significant amounts. Even so, China has both raised prices and cut back on export amounts, exacerbating both rare earth shortages and expenses for the U.S.

"The immediate challenge is getting access to alternate sources of rare earths," said NCPA Senior Fellow H. Sterling Burnett. "It takes the United States five times as long as other countries to get a permit and get a mine brought online. What takes two years in Canada takes more like ten years here due to restrictive regulation policies and differing jurisdictions for multiple agencies."

Rare earths are the key components of every form of green energy technology, including solar cells, wind turbines, energy efficient lighting products and others. They are also crucial for manufacture of aircraft, lasers, X-Ray units and a spectrum of defense technologies.

Many countries and international companies have begun to seek alternative supplies, including new mines. Though reliable data for rare earth operations outside of China are lacking, the report finds that the most likely sources are five mines, one of which is California's Mountain Pass, the only mine in America dedicated to rare earths. Molycorp, the owner, will mine only a handful of rare earth minerals, but it hopes to produce 20,000 tons per year by 2012. By contrast, China produced 124,000 tons of rare earths in 2009.

**[Finding Sources of Rare Earths Beyond China](http://www.ncpa.org/pdfs/ib108.pdf)**: <http://www.ncpa.org/pdfs/ib108.pdf>

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[H. Sterling Burnett](#), Ph.D., is one of the country's leading authorities on energy and environmental issues. He is the lead analyst of the National Center for Policy Analysis' (NCPA) E-Team. Burnett's area of expertise includes topics that affect every American, such as government environmental policy, offshore drilling, global warming, endangered species and public lands.

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