

CMI Masterclass: Securing North America's Future, A Conversation on the Critical Minerals Supply Chains with Jack Lifton

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In an insightful interview conducted by Brandon Colwell, the Director and Government Relations Liaison for the [Critical Minerals Institute](#) (CMI), with CMI Co-Chairman Jack Lifton, the focus is on the burgeoning challenges and strategic responses related to critical mineral supply chains in North America, especially in the context of China's dominance. Jack, a veteran in the field with over 60 years of experience, points out the significant gap in subject matter expertise within the governments of the United States and Canada. This gap, he argues, hinders the effective development and implementation of policies in the mineral sector. He emphasizes the complex and time-consuming process of converting a mineral discovery into an economically viable mining project, underscoring the need for more informed and strategic decision-making in governmental investments and policy development in this domain.

Jack also delves into the recent fiscal commitments by the U.S. and Canadian governments towards critical minerals and battery manufacturing, expressing skepticism about their impact due to the governments' limited understanding of the industry. He advocates for the inclusion of industry specialists in policy-making processes, especially in evaluating and financing mining projects. Jack raises concerns about the potential misallocation

of government funds, stressing the importance of directing these investments towards those with genuine expertise and experience in the industry.

Lastly, Jack addresses the specific challenges within the critical mineral supply chain, particularly highlighting the processing segment as the most critical and challenging area. He notes the decline in North American capabilities in this area due to historical outsourcing and a lack of sustained investment in processing technologies. Jack contrasts this with China's significant progress and dominance in processing technologies, presenting a significant challenge for North America in its bid to rebuild a competitive and independent critical mineral industry. He underscores the need for substantial investment in education and the development of expertise in process engineering and metallurgy. In conclusion, Jack discusses the broader implications for industries dependent on these minerals, such as the automotive industry, and the potential impact of government policies and market dynamics on these sectors.

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