

Young Kim's Critical Minerals Crusade: One American Lawmaker's Bid to Break China's Grip

written by Tracy Hughes | August 27, 2025

Young Kim's ascent from Orange County freshman to Capitol Hill's point guard in America's minerals cold war was cemented during her trek across the Mojave flats to MP Materials Corp. (NYSE: MP) Mountain Pass [last week](#). The visit to the only American rare earth mine—timed just days after her Foreign Affairs Subcommittee's blockbuster hearing on “[Breaking China's Chokehold on Critical Mineral Supply Chains](#)”—was part optics, part oversight, and all message: the United States will not allow Beijing to dictate the raw materials of the twenty-first-century economy. Kim's district may be better known for aerospace and clean-tech assembly lines than for open-pit mines, but those factories cannot run without lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, and the arcane suite of rare earths that power batteries, lasers, and guidance systems. Right now China refines the lion's share—60-90%—of virtually every one of those inputs and has already shown its willingness to throttle supply whenever that suits its geopolitical aims, most recently by restricting gallium, germanium, and selected rare-earth exports. For Kim, that dependence is “a sucker punch to U.S. industry and a wake-up call to Washington.”

The lawmaker wasted no time turning hearings into legislation. Hours after gaveling out, she teamed with Democrat Ami Bera and Guam Delegate James Moylan to introduce the [Minerals Security Partnership Authorization Act](#), a bill that would hard-wire the

State Department-led coalition of fourteen countries plus the EU into U.S. statute. The measure orders diplomats to team up with the Development Finance Corp, EXIM Bank, and allied export-credit agencies to “identify, de-risk, and fund” mines, refineries, and recycling plants that meet stringent ESG standards—effectively offering resource-rich nations a transparent alternative to Beijing’s subsidized, opaque deals. A companion House resolution urges a surge of joint ventures in Africa so that the Congo or Zambia need not choose between Chinese capital and no capital at all, while the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party presses the SEC to delist Chinese mining firms entangled with the PLA. Supply security has migrated from the dusty backwaters of mining policy to the center of trade, finance, and human-rights portfolios.

Kim couples legislation with theater. At Mountain Pass, she spotlighted the Pentagon’s [multibillion-dollar partnership](#) with MP Materials and Apple’s half-billion-dollar magnet commitment, arguing that “Xi Jinping should never decide whether an American soldier gets a working radar.” The message landed because it dovetails with rising diplomatic momentum. June’s G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan pledges to coordinate against “deliberate market disruption” and mobilize capital for responsible mining; a still-nascent Quad Critical Minerals Initiative promises co-investment and specialization so that Australia’s spodumene, India’s new processing incentives, Japan’s cathode capacity, and America’s magnet know-how fuse into a democratic supply web. Kim calls this emerging lattice “a coalition of certainty,” and her bill seeks to lock that ethic in place, immune to electoral swings.

Obstacles remain. Environmental reviews average seven years, refining plants cost billions, and China can undercut prices long enough to starve rival projects. Kim is therefore drafting rough-cut permitting reforms and tax credits for recycling,

citing International Energy Agency estimates that circular supply could shave a third off virgin-mine demand by mid-century. She also knows Beijing will counterpunch; a strategic stockpile for neodymium-praseodymium magnets is already under discussion to blunt price wars.

A year ago, critical minerals barely cracked the evening news. Today, they headline G7 communiqués, animate bipartisan bills, and suck elected officials into dusty mines because Young Kim keeps pounding the drum. If her Minerals Security Partnership bill clears the Senate this fall, the United States will, for the first time, bind diplomacy, finance, and defense around one goal: ensuring that no foreign power can “lay a finger” on the materials that run modern life. That may become her legacy—proof that a determined freshman can redraw the map of global power simply by following the supply chain back to its source.