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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To encourage the Secretary of the Interior to enter into memoranda of understanding with agencies in other countries with respect to scientific and technical cooperation in the earth sciences.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. WITTMAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To encourage the Secretary of the Interior to enter into memoranda of understanding with agencies in other countries with respect to scientific and technical cooperation in the earth sciences.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Earth Sciences and
5 Cooperation Enhancement Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING WITH RESPECT**
2 **TO SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERA-**
3 **TION IN EARTH SCIENCES.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may enter into a
5 memorandum of understanding with the head of an agen-
6 cy of a foreign country with respect to scientific and tech-
7 nical cooperation in the earth sciences.

8 (b) PRIORITIZATION.—The Secretary shall prioritize
9 entering into memoranda of understanding under sub-
10 section (a) with the heads of agencies of partner foreign
11 countries.

12 (c) PRIORITIZATION OF CERTAIN ACTIVITIES.—A
13 memorandum of understanding entered into under sub-
14 section (a) shall prioritize carrying out activities in a coop-
15 erative manner, including the following:

16 (1) Acquisition, compilation, analysis, and inter-
17 pretation of geologic, geophysical, geochemical, and
18 spectroscopic remote sensing data.

19 (2) Prospectivity mapping and mineral resource
20 assessment.

21 (3) Analysis of geoscience data, including devel-
22 oping derivative map products that can help more
23 effectively evaluate the mineral resources of the
24 other country.

25 (4) Scientific collaboration to enhance the un-
26 derstanding and management of the natural re-

1 sources of the other country and thereby contribute
2 to the sustainable development of the mineral re-
3 sources sector of the other country.

4 (5) Training and capacity building in each area
5 described in paragraphs (1) through (4).

6 (6) Facilitation of higher education with respect
7 to and specialized training in geoscience and mineral
8 resource management at institutions of higher edu-
9 cation located within the United States.

10 (7) Training in environmental and workplace
11 standards, led by the Secretary, for an agency of a
12 foreign country that is a party to such a memo-
13 randum of understanding.

14 (d) ENCOURAGEMENT OF DIRECT CONTACTS AND
15 COOPERATION.—A memorandum of understanding en-
16 tered into under subsection (a) may encourage and facili-
17 tate the development of direct contacts and cooperation
18 among and between entities of the United States and each
19 country that is a party to the memorandum of under-
20 standing, including government agencies, universities, re-
21 search centers, and private companies.

22 (e) PARTICIPATION OF THIRD PARTIES.—To the ex-
23 tent permitted by the laws and policies of the government
24 of each country that is a party to a memorandum of un-
25 derstanding entered into under subsection (a), the memo-

1 random of understanding shall encourage government en-
2 tities or agencies of the United States and each such coun-
3 try and other entities that are not parties to the memo-
4 randum of understanding, including scientists, technical
5 experts, institutions of other foreign countries, and inter-
6 national organizations, to participate in activities carried
7 out pursuant to the memorandum of understanding.

8 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
10 priated to the Secretary to carry out this Act \$3,000,000
11 for fiscal year 2025, to remain available until expended.

12 (b) REQUIRED USE OF AMOUNTS.—The Secretary
13 shall use at least 70 percent of the amounts authorized
14 to be appropriated under subsection (a) to support the im-
15 plementation of memoranda of understanding entered into
16 under section 2(a), including paying salaries and expenses
17 necessary to carry out the activities described in section
18 2(c).

19 (c) ALLOWED USE OF AMOUNTS.—The Secretary
20 may use amounts authorized to be appropriated under
21 subsection (a) that are not used in accordance with sub-
22 section (b)—

23 (1) to support the planning and coordinating of
24 critical mineral data collection;

- 1 (2) to adopt shared data management ap-
2 proaches with partner foreign countries; and
3 (3) to coordinate data management approaches
4 with partner foreign countries.

5 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

6 In this Act:

7 (1) **CRITICAL MINERAL.**—The term “critical
8 mineral” means any mineral, element, substance, or
9 material—

10 (A) included on the list of critical minerals
11 published by the United States Geological Sur-
12 vey pursuant to section 7002(c) of the Energy
13 Act of 2020 (30 U.S.C. 1606(c));

14 (B) included on the list of critical mate-
15 rials published by the Department of Energy
16 pursuant to section 7002(a) of the Energy Act
17 of 2020 (30 U.S.C. 1606(a)); and

18 (C) designated as a material of interest by
19 the Defense Logistics Agency.

20 (2) **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**—The
21 term “institution of higher education” has the
22 meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the
23 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

1 (3) PARTNER FOREIGN COUNTRY.—The term
2 “partner foreign country” means a country that is
3 a source of a critical mineral and—

4 (A) with which the United States has en-
5 tered into a mutual defense treaty or other mu-
6 tual defense agreement;

7 (B) that is recognized by the Secretary of
8 State and the Secretary of Defense as a stra-
9 tegic partner due to an established bilateral
10 agreement that emphasizes mutual interests in
11 security, defense, and critical mineral supply
12 chains, including countries designated under
13 United States strategic frameworks and agree-
14 ments;

15 (C) with which the United States has en-
16 tered into a comprehensive economic and trade
17 agreement that includes provisions for the col-
18 laboration on critical mineral resources and to
19 safeguard supply chains critical to national se-
20 curity and economic stability;

21 (D) with which the Secretary has entered
22 into a memorandum of understanding con-
23 cerning scientific and technical cooperation in
24 earth sciences under section 2(a); or

1 (E) with which the Secretary of State is
2 working under the Partnership for Global Infra-
3 structure and Investment to advance a critical
4 mineral project.

5 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
6 the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-
7 rector of the United States Geologic Survey.