

Rare Minerals Supplies: No Need for Panic

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Market forces will reduce supply risk for critical minerals, according to an article in the most recent edition of *Issues in Science and Technology*, the award-winning journal of UT Dallas, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering and Institute of Medicine.

(PhysOrg.com) -- Alarming media reports have raised concern about U.S. dependence on foreign sources of rare minerals that are critically important in military applications and emerging industries. But there is no need to panic, according to an article in the Summer 2010 *Issues in Science and Technology*.

Although there is cause for concern about the supply of critical minerals, there are a number of steps that policymakers and industrial consumers can take to head off problems, writes Roderick G. Eggert, the chair of a

2008 National Research Council report on the subject.

Eggert believes that market forces will encourage producers and users of critical minerals to undertake activities that reduce supply risk or the need for the critical minerals. But he also argues that government has an essential role to play.

“The U.S. government,” he writes, “should fight policies of exporting nations that restrict raw material exports to the detriment of U.S. users of these raw materials.”

Also in the summer 2010 *Issues*, Robert B. Jackson and James Salzman of Duke University tackle the vexing issues surrounding geoengineering, the intentional manipulation of Earth’s climate to offset the warming from [greenhouse gas emissions](#).

Although they argue that human-engineered changes to the planet are fraught with problems, they write that research in three areas could lead to the greatest climate benefits with the smallest chance of unintentional environmental harm.

Bridget Terry Long of Harvard University writes about the college affordability crisis, arguing that aid programs to expand college access could be improved by favoring grants over loans and need-based over merit-based criteria.

Stephen Ezell warns that the United States lags far behind countries such as Japan and Korea in the use of information technology to improve the efficiency of the highway system and reduce congestion.

More information: www.issues.org/

Provided by University of Texas at Dallas

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