



Committee: House Rules Committee

Event: [Rules Committee Hearing H.R. 2189, H.R. 3617, H.R. 261](#)

Date: February 9, 2026

Executive Summary:

On February 9, 2026, the House Rules Committee heard testimony on the following bill of interest: the Securing America’s Critical Minerals Supply Act (Securing Act) ([H.R. 3617](#)). Rules also discussed the Law Enforcement Innovate to De-Escalate Act ([H.R. 2189](#)) and the Undersea Cable Protection Act of 2025 (UCPA) ([H.R. 261](#)). All three were reported to the House Floor under [H. Res. 1042](#).

Member Toplines:

[Chair Virginia Foxx \(R-NC-05\)](#): Foxx provided an overview of the bills and explained that the Securing Act would amend the Department of Energy’s (DOE) *Organization Act* by defining “critical energy resource” as any energy resource with a vulnerable supply chain that is needed by the energy sector. She stated that the bill would direct the Secretary of Energy to conduct an assessment of domestic critical energy resources, the vulnerability of these supply chains, and the energy security considerations of these resources when used in energy technologies.

*Ranking Member Mary Scanlon (D-PA-05)*¹: Scanlon stated that the three bills at hand are not directed at lowering costs or helping working families, asserting that Republicans are prioritizing “...special interests while regular people get screwed over yet again.” She raised issues with the Securing Act, arguing that the bill defines critical energy resources so broadly that it could be read to include oil, gas, coal, etc.

Panel One - UCPA Discussion

Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04): Westerman spoke in favor of UCPA, explaining that undersea cables have a lifespan of 25 years, yet the needed special use permit required under the *National Marine Sanctuaries Act* only lasts five years, leading to no new cables in National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS) in the last 20 years. He explained that the bill prevents the Secretary of Commerce from requiring a special use permit for routing cables through an NMS and eliminates the five year timeline.

Rep. Sarah Elfreth (D-MD-03): Elfreth spoke against UCPA, defending the need for special use permits to protect and fund marine sanctuary care. She noted that corporations could then drill into the seafloor for free and raised concerns around the lack of oversight in the most sensitive ecological areas. Elfreth reported that the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association has not denied any fiber optics special use permit in the last 25 years.

¹ Ranking Member Scanlon’s opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo’s composition.

Panel Three - Securing Act Discussion²

Rep. **Brett Guthrie** (R-KY-02): Guthrie spoke in favor of the Securing Act, noting that China controls the majority of critical mineral supply chains and has exploited this power via export controls. He emphasized that this legislation enhances domestic supply chain buildout to support increased energy generation.

Rep. **Kathy Castor** (D-FL-14): Castor asserted that the Securing Act would harm U.S. energy production and lead to increased costs. She reported that the International Energy Agency estimates that mineral demand for clean energy technology will triple by 2030 and quadruple by 2040. She argued that electricity rates are high because the Trump administration has sabotaged renewables, pointing to illegal wind project cancellations. She reiterated Scanlon's concern that "critical energy resources" are vague and does not focus on critical minerals.

Major Takeaways

- Guthrie expressed his support for an "all-of-the-above" energy approach and defended the terminology, as it encompasses "all" energy. He acknowledged that critical minerals are also needed for wind turbines and solar panels.
- Rep. **Jim McGovern** (D-MA-02) raised concern that critical energy resources could include oil, gas, or coal. He asked if Guthrie would favor an amendment to limit "resources" to the critical minerals list under the *Energy Act of 2020*. He explained that the legislation defines critical minerals as minerals essential to our economy and have vulnerable supply chains, citing cobalt and lithium as examples. He asked why the bill was titled as such.
 - Guthrie defended the bill, emphasizing that it is meant to empower DOE to review all energy resources to further energy independence.
- Castor flagged concern that this bill is a giveaway to "dirty energy companies" and allows the DOE to further "boost" fossil fuel companies. She highlighted the recent cancellations of energy projects, which has exacerbated mounting electricity costs, and defended renewable energy as cleaner, cheaper, and necessary if the U.S. is serious about countering China.
 - Scanlon asked Castor for help understanding what the bill accomplishes. Castor replied that President **Donald Trump** promised to deliver to fossil fuel companies during his campaign, arguing that clean energy projects have been cancelled to maintain fossil fuel's "competitive edge."
- Rep. **Erin Houchin** (R-IN-09) asked Guthrie to comment on the bill's value in securing supply chains. Guthrie replied that the U.S. does not mine or process critical minerals and highlighted the risk of China dumping minerals. He reiterated the need for diverse energy sources, as well as improved transmission.
 - Houchin agreed, emphasizing the need for critical minerals to power manufacturing and artificial intelligence.
- Rep. **Teresa Leger Fernandez** (D-NM-03) asked if the bill will lower energy prices. Castor replied that it will likely do the opposite.
- Leger Fernandez shared that renewable energy projects have benefited rural farmers and ranchers. She also noted that DOE has lost more than 3,500 employees due to

² Note: Our coverage of this hearing did not include Panel Two, which covered the Law Enforcement Innovate to De-Escalate Act (H.R. 2189).

President Trump's attacks, including employees who would oversee critical minerals work.