



The weekly brief on the U.S. critical-minerals, rare-earth, and coal build-out, for the people who staff and supply it.

TOP SIGNAL OF THE WEEK

Antimony takes center stage as the US push widens beyond rare earths

The build-out is broadening to the metals the military cannot do without, and antimony leads. Perpetua Resources began its 2026 construction season at the Stibnite gold-antimony mine in Idaho on May 30, days after a federal court denied opponents' bid to halt the project on May 29. The Department of War has called Stibnite the only US mine that could meet defense antimony demand by 2029, in a country that mines no antimony today and was 85% import reliant in 2024. For the people who staff and supply these projects, a fast-tracked, federally backed mine build is near-term work.

Source: [MINING.COM](#); [U.S. Army](#). Court ruling May 29; construction ramp May 30, 2026.

BUILD-OUT & FUNDING MOVES

ANTIMONY Feb 2026

United States Antimony Corp secured about \$27M in Defense Production Act Title III funding in February 2026 to expand its Thompson Falls refinery in Montana; it adds to the five-year contract worth up to \$245M to supply antimony to the national defense stockpile that the company won in September 2025.

Source: [U.S. Dept. of War](#) (DPA Title III), a February 24, 2026 award announced March 4; U.S. Antimony Corp; Defense Logistics Agency.

TUNGSTEN Policy

The US military must drop tungsten metal powder and heavy alloy, rare-earth magnets, and tantalum sourced from covered nations, meaning China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, by 2027 under federal acquisition rules, yet the US has not mined tungsten commercially since 2015 and imports more than half its supply, raising the premium on new domestic and allied projects.

Source: [USGS](#); 10 U.S.C. 4872; DFARS 252.225-7052.

LITHIUM May 26

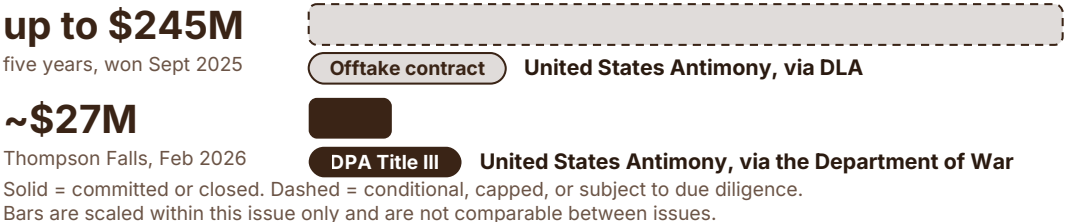
Smackover Lithium, the Standard Lithium and Equinor venture, awarded the last key construction contract for its South West Arkansas lithium project to S&B Engineers, clearing the path toward a final investment decision expected in 2026.

Source: [Smackover Lithium](#), May 26, 2026.

THE 2027 RULE, AND WHAT THE U.S. CANNOT YET SUPPLY

1	Tungsten powder, heavy alloy not mined commercially since 2015; more than half of supply imported	by 2027
2	Rare-earth magnets covered by the same acquisition rule	by 2027
3	Tantalum covered by the same acquisition rule	by 2027
4	Antimony, for context no U.S. mine today; 85% net import reliant in 2024 The U.S. military must drop material from covered nations: China, Russia, Iran, North Korea. Source: USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026; 10 U.S.C. 4872; DFARS 252.225-7052.	

FEDERAL MONEY BEHIND ONE REFINERY



HIRING & STAFFING DEMAND

Where projects are ramping and what roles they need, for our recruiter readers.

HIRING Antimony · Idaho

Perpetua Resources is ramping Stibnite's 2026 build season, including on-site worker housing, access roads, and powerline work; the work calls for construction trades, heavy-equipment operators, and mining and processing staff.

HIRING Antimony · Montana

United States Antimony is expanding its Thompson Falls refinery, adding the processing and metallurgical staff to run new capacity.

HIRING Magnets · Oklahoma

USA Rare Earth's Stillwater magnet plant is in early commercial operation and is posting for production operators, maintenance technicians, and process engineers.

ROLES IN DEMAND THIS WEEK

Perpetua Resources

Stibnite, Idaho

no headcount announced

Construction trades

Heavy-equipment operators

Mining staff

Processing staff

United States Antimony

Thompson Falls, Montana

no headcount announced

Processing staff

Metallurgical staff

USA Rare Earth

Stillwater, Oklahoma

no headcount announced

Production operators

Maintenance technicians

Process engineers

Roles as named or directly implied by each company.

FEATURED COMMODITY EXPLAINER

FEATURED: ANTIMONY

Antimony is a metalloid the defense industry depends on, for armor-piercing ammunition, night vision, flame retardants, and lead-acid batteries. The US mines none today and was 85% net import reliant in 2024; in December 2024 China banned antimony exports to the US. Perpetua's Stibnite mine in Idaho is the leading domestic answer and could meet roughly 35% of US demand in its first six years of production. That gap, between zero output and hard defense need, is why antimony now draws so much federal money.

THE GAP STIBNITE COULD CLOSE (SHARE OF U.S. DEMAND)

Imported today

85%

Stibnite could add

~35%

share of U.S. antimony demand, first six years

0 active U.S. antimony mines today.

Figures: [USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2025](#); Perpetua Resources.

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