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**RARE Request Prompts Plan to Form Congressional Rare Earth Caucus
by Brian Truscott, Managing Editor**

Few people outside the rare earth space noticed a new trade association pop up in Washington last month, one calling itself RARE, The Association for Rare Earth.

That was 33 days ago.

RARE's Washington profile should climb considerably on Wednesday, when U.S. Congressman Mike Coffman announces his intention to create a Congressional Rare Earth Caucus.

Why?

Coffman's move comes less than a month after RARE sent an open letter to House and Senate members urging the creation of such a caucus, which is just what the representative from Colorado will now cobble together in Congress.

"We are very pleased that RARE's call for the creation of a Congressional Rare Earth Caucus was answered so quickly. Developing a political consensus about how to secure a sustainable supply of REEs (rare earth elements) will have significant impact on thousands of companies and millions of American jobs," RARE President Adam Falkoff said (pictured left).

The announcement also arrives less than two months after a Defense Department report warned that the U.S. is overly reliant on foreign (Read: China) sources of REEs.

China, which began dominating the rare earth industry almost two decades ago, now holds a virtual monopoly, or about 97%, of global rare earth trade. So the formation of a congressional caucus suggests that there's a growing political demand for a national strategy to counter China's hold on the REE industry.

Falkoff said by phone from Washington Tuesday that the actual make-up of what is to be a bipartisan caucus will be announced in a few days; that the informal group will focus on national security, resource development, economic security, trade and renewable energy.

"The creation of such a caucus is important, because it quickly identifies those who are knowledgeable on the issues, the ones who can be responsive to the REE community in their congressional districts," he said.

While activities such as the formation of a caucus often live, breath and eventually die within Washington's beltway, Falkoff said this rare earth caucus – the first of its kind in the world – will be instrumental in moving the issue of rare earth elements on to people's radar screens.

"The seriousness with which the Congress is approaching this issue will help to define timely initiatives required to increase global production of these critical elements," Falkoff said.

In other words, a House caucus is the first step in building an effective voting block and creating a strategic bridge to the White House and key national departments – energy, defense, trade and homeland security.

Falkoff said RARE will now “be moving quickly and efficiently, delivering results month in and month out for the REE community – producers, manufacturers, retailers, end users,” he said.

And the end game here? To increase the environmentally sustainable production of rare earths in North America, he said.