

To: The Members of House Transportation Committee
From: Alison Despathy
Date: 2/13/2025

Public Comment

Yesterday I attended your afternoon Committee meeting regarding the Advanced Clean Car Impact. Thank you for your work and questions on this issue.

Child labor, as well as massive exploitation of the natural resources and ecosystems of the Global South is horribly real, common, supported by many and disturbingly justified by many for this 'energy transition'

The degree of environmental and social injustice is astounding and devastating as countries like the United States and our state of Vermont build out and incentivize EV cars, electric expansion, charging stations and massive battery farms on the backs of children, the impoverished and environmental destruction in the Global South.

From a human rights and ecological health standpoint, we should be rectifying this nightmare versus encouraging and supporting it through mandated programs such as the Advanced Clean Cars.

If you have a moment, please check out the links below to understand the depth of the abuse.

Once you see it and know it as Representative Casey clearly has - you cannot forget it and leave it out of the conversation. It is a tragedy.

An article I wrote in VTdigger on this subject is listed below and has embedded links also.

<https://vtdigger.org/2022/12/12/alison-despathy-blood-elements-blood-power-and-blood-money/>

CHILD LABOR in EV mineral mining sources

US Department of Labor

Combatting Child Labor in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Cobalt Industry

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/combating-child-labor-democratic-republic-congos-cobalt-industry-cotecco>

From Cobalt to Cars: How China Exploits Child and Forced Labor in the Congo

<https://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/from-cobalt-to-cars-how-china-exploits-child-and-forced-labor-in-the-congo>

Dell, Microsoft, Tesla also among tech firms names in case brought by families of children killed or injured while mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/dec/16/apple-and-google-named-in-us-lawsuit-over-congolese-child-cobalt-mining-deaths#:~:text=The%20lawsuit%20argues%20that%20Apple,to%20death%20and%20serious%20injury.>

The Lithium Triangle:Where Chile, Argentina and Bolivia Meet

<https://hir.harvard.edu/lithium-triangle/>

Why the Rush to Mine Lithium Could Dry Up the High Andes

<https://e360.yale.edu/features/lithium-mining-water-andes-argentina#:~:text=The%20extraction%20lowers%20water%20tables,underground%20water%20reaches%20the%20surface.>

Copper and the Dark side of the Energy Transition- Abuses and ecological devastation at the Codelco Copper mine in Chile.

<https://youtu.be/jNUbroQ2XZ4?si=WJXceJ0hrWjArIf>

This is a mere glimpse of the documented and ongoing injustice due to the global battle for resources and minerals required for electrification.

If I can offer any testimony on this issue, please let me know. It is a critical aspect of the conversation.