

JOE BIDEN • Published December 16, 2022 11:55am EST

# Biden turns to country with documented child labor issues for green energy mineral supplies: 'It's egregious'

Top Republican on House Natural Resources subcommittee vows oversight of Biden admin

By **Thomas Catenacci | Fox News**

## Pete Buttigieg slammed for climate hypocrisy over 18 taxpayer-funded private flights

West Virginia coal miner Bo Copley joined 'Fox & Friends First' to discuss Buttigieg's taxpayer-funded private flights and Biden looking to fund overseas mining projects.

The Biden administration opened the door to financing mining projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Zambia to bolster the [global green energy supply chain](#) as it pushes ahead with its climate agenda, despite the DRC's documented issues with child laborers being used in such mines.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken entered into the agreement Tuesday, signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the two nations and lauding their work improving the electric vehicle battery supply chain. During a signing ceremony, Blinken said the "future" was happening, given the importance of cobalt for manufacturing electric vehicles.

"I really want to commend the DRC and Zambia, their governments for their leadership and vision in developing an electric vehicle battery council," Blinken said Tuesday. "This is the future, and it is happening in the DRC and in Zambia."

DRC foreign minister Stanley Kakubo added during the event that his country was committed to actualizing the deal "in a hurry."

## **GREEN ENERGY PROJECTS FACE STARK ENVIRONMENTAL, LOCAL OPPOSITION NATIONWIDE**



Secretary of State Antony Blinken attends an international diplomatic engagement on Aug. 5, 2022. (Tang Chhin Sothy/AFP via Getty Images)

Green energy technologies [like electric vehicle batteries](#), solar panels and wind turbines require a massive expansion of cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel, graphite, zinc and other mineral production. The vast majority of mining and processing of such materials, though, takes place outside the U.S., making the nation more reliant on foreign minerals despite its large domestic resources.

In 2021, the DRC alone mined more than 70% of the global supply of cobalt, while the U.S. mined just 0.4%, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The DRC also has an estimated 3.5 million metric tons of cobalt reserves, the largest amount in the world.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS KEEP PUSHING EXTREME MEASURES AMID GLOBAL ENERGY CRISIS**

However, independent investigations conducted in recent years by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Amnesty International have documented how many cobalt mines located in [the DRC employ child laborers](#). The Biden administration also released a report in October showing that child labor continues to take place in the mines.

"Many children we spoke to told us that they were frequently ill. Inhaling cobalt dust can cause hard metal lung disease – a potentially fatal condition," a 2016 Amnesty International report stated. "Skin contact with cobalt can cause dermatitis – a chronic rash. Yet the children and other miners have neither masks nor gloves to protect them."

"The children told us that they endured long hours – up to 12 hours a day – working at the mines hauling back-breaking loads of between 20 and 40kg for US\$1-2 per day," it continued. "Many had nothing to eat all day. Fourteen-year-old Paul, who began mining aged 12 and worked underground, told us he would often 'spend 24 hours down in the tunnels. I arrived in the morning and would leave the following morning.'"



**About 40,000 children are believed to work in mines in southern DRC, according to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. (Reuters)**

Overall, about 40,000 children are believed to work in mines in southern DRC, according to UNICEF.

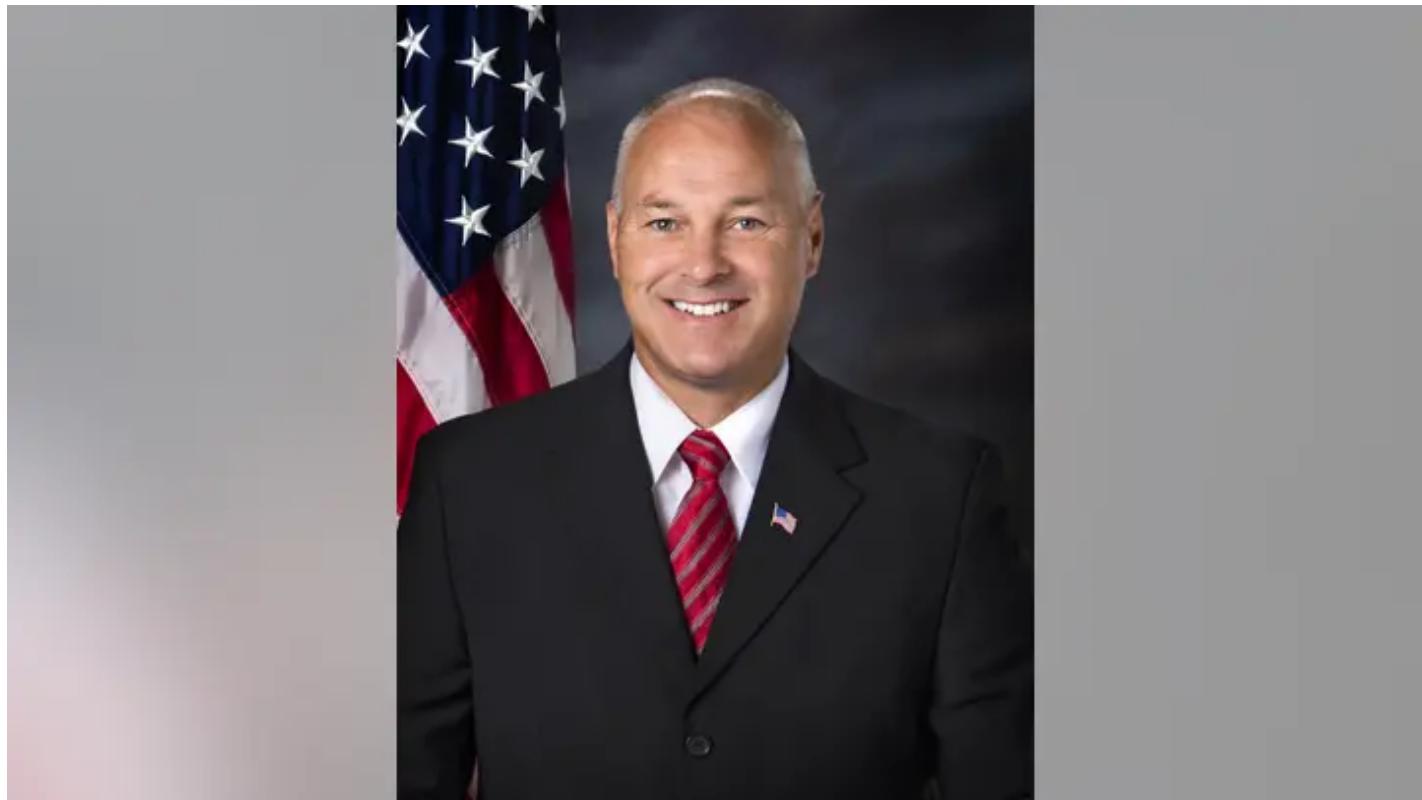
"It's egregious that the Biden administration would enter into an MOU to mine critical minerals in the Congo, where we know they use child slave labor to mine these minerals and they have almost zero labor standards and almost zero environmental standards," Rep. Pete Stauber, R-Minn., the top Republican on the House Natural Resources Energy and Mineral Subcommittee, told Fox News Digital in an interview.

"And yet this administration will not allow mining in the United States," he added.

## **PUSH FOR WIND ENERGY IN THE WEST THREATENS GOLDEN EAGLES**

Stauber said his subcommittee will conduct investigations into the Biden administration's mining policies once Republicans take control of the House and he assumes the chairmanship of the panel next year.

"We are not only going to legislate, but we're going to have oversight," he told Fox News Digital. "We want to know why this administration continues to not allow mining in the United States. We want to know why they've pulled federal permits without allowing an environmental impact statement to move forward."



**Rep. Pete Stauber, R-Minn., said he is planning on conducting oversight into the Biden administration's mining policies when he takes the top position on the House Natural Resources Energy and Mineral Subcommittee next year. (Rep. Pete Stauber, R-Minn.)**

Earlier this year, the Department of the Interior canceled two existing hardrock mineral leases in the mineral-rich Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota and announced that it would move forward with a 20-year ban on new mining projects in the region, citing environmental reasons.

The projects contained about 88% of the nation's cobalt reserves and had a project labor agreement in place for the site to be unionized.

### **BIDEN ANNOUNCES \$36 BILLION BAILOUT FOR UNION PENSION PLAN**

"Don't just listen to Joe Biden and his activist administration's words, look at their actions," said Stauber, who represents the district where the projects are located. "Joe Biden, as far as workers go and mining goes, is 'anywhere but America and any worker but American.' It's unacceptable."

In addition, the Biden administration has implemented regulatory roadblocks on mines in Alaska, Arizona and Nevada, which have massive copper, molybdenum and lithium deposits.



**Interior Secretary Deb Haaland speaks during a news conference in Denver on July 22, 2021. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski, File)**

The National Mining Association (NMA), meanwhile, said it wasn't surprised at the administration's action given the immediate need for resources, but argued there was significant need for a better long-term strategy.

"It would be a mistake to interpret a strategy intent on ensuring immediate supply as a long-term comprehensive strategy that will effectively meet demands for the future," NMA spokesperson Ashley Burke told Fox News Digital. "There needs to be a much greater focus on mine permitting at home."

"We have robust mineral reserves here in the U.S.; there is simply no better place for the administration to be supporting mining projects, supporting our economy with high-paying American jobs that are producing American materials under world-leading environmental, labor and safety standards," Burke continued.

The NMA has [repeatedly sounded the alarm](#) on U.S. mineral supply chains as the federal government pushes green transition policies. In August, the group said relying on mineral imports has been an "increasingly problematic issue for decades and has now become a crisis." The group has also advocated for a [streamlined permitting process](#) for mining projects.

The State Department didn't respond to a request for comment.

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Thomas Catenacci is a politics writer for Fox News Digital.

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F **fearporn**

...

4 hours ago

What happens when we run out of these minerals because they are not near as abundant as coal, LPN, Hydrogen or oil?? Then what people??

[like electric vehicle batteries](#), solar panels and wind turbines require a massive expansion of cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel, graphite, zinc and other mineral production.

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M **mixoplix**

...

3 hours ago

Don't forget sulphur. 70% or more of the current sulphur supply comes as a byproduct of fossil fuel production. It's not mined easily so without fossil fuels the battery production is in trouble.

Reply · 21 1 · Share

↳ 1 reply

↳ the 4th monkey

...

3 hours ago

When asked to clarify, Kamala cackled and replied: these are children because they are all children and we know children to be children who are not adults but born children and we could have avoided this problem if all of them were aborted and they were not there to be used for labor...and if Tanzania does not want their children to get exploited, they should open the southern order so Mozambican and Zambian children can work in the mines for our electric cars! A friend in need....(inaudible due to more cackles)

*(Edited)*

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T **totallysirius**

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3 hours ago

Anyone else realize most of those elements needed for electric cars have to be strip mined?

Especially Lithium, it occurs at such low concentrations that it requires a very large amount of strip mined ore just to get a small amount of Lithium.

Reply ·  131  2 · Share

T **tigersnark**

2 hours ago

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They don't really care about the environment. It's all about wealth and power.

Reply ·  51  1 · Share

↳ 4 replies

M **Mypurpled**

3 hours ago

...

Sad that you could present all the evidence right in front of their faces and they still wouldn't believe

Reply ·  55  1 · Share

↳ 3 replies

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T **ThisMessageViolatesCommunityStandards**

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3 hours ago

Translated: "We know mining the necessary minerals and metals for "green" technology is an environmental nightmare far worse than oil, gas, and global warming, so we commend these poorer countries for doing what's prohibited by the EPA in America."

Reply ·  175  · Share

R **rhix**

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2 hours ago

That's all "green" tech and policies have always done, they just outsource the dying to areas without any hotels nice enough for the media to bother. The hysteria around effective pesticides alone leaves hundreds of thousands to die of mosquito borne illness every single year

Reply ·  18  1 · Share

↳  gm-esq 

...

2 hours ago

The Biden Administration is as close to pure evil as I have ever seen....

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↳ 6 replies

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CNNandMSLSD

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4 hours ago

Meanwhile, China opens a new coal plant every week. If we had zero emissions, it would not affect worldwide carbon emissions while China and India take no part. So, I don't see the point of making Americans suffer unless they are just doing it for fun.

Reply ·  245  8 · Share

MontauktheEnd

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4 hours ago

China does not spend time discussing pronouns or gender fluidity - they are taking over the world economy while we rearrange the deck chairs on the Lusitania...

Reply ·  108  9 · Share

↳ 6 replies

Dufus099

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4 hours ago

For control..that is the only reason.

Reply ·  42  9 · Share

↳ 1 reply

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2

2024orburst

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3 hours ago

One ton of refined lithium requires roughly 500,000 gallons of water to produce. Thats just the beginning of the eco disaster these EV's are causing. Tip of the iceberg. EV's are a billion dollar scam. Many will get very wealthy - then it will go away except for some small practical applications. EV's are unsustainable - as is solar/wind for grid replacement.

Reply ·  263  4 · Share

H hodor

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3 hours ago

It reminds me of plastic. When I was a kid, plastics were saving the world, preserving so many trees that would be otherwise cut down.

Now plastic is in our blood when we're born.

The reality is, a combination of things is required. EVs are not valueless, but they aren't a perfect solution either. You are correct, that technology should advance

and other methods will become viable.

Reply ·  50  2 · Share

↳ 1 reply

s **song'of'the'trout**

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3 hours ago

100% correct. EV is a short lived fad and a dead-end technology. Other means of propulsion will replace both EV and petroleum.

Reply ·  46  5 · Share

↳ 7 replies

↳ Show 21 more replies

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urrt

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3 hours ago

The pursuit of green energy is nonsense. We lack the technology to support our population's energy needs through green energy. Why our leadership is going to such lengths to hinder our economic growth via the pursuit of green energy while the other major economies in the world shun green energy is a mystery that merits investigation.

Reply ·  116  5 · Share

H **Hook'EmHorns**

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2 hours ago

Wealth redistribution. Those in power get wealthy while the rest of us pay for it. Doesn't anyone remember Barack Obama and Solyndra that went bankrupt after all those millions of dollars given to Solyndra were laundered into Obama's offshore bank accounts? How soon the average dumbed down American...See more

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↳ 4 replies

P **patbenson324**

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2 hours ago

The very elite are going to make \$\$\$ on taxpayers backs that's why. Follow the money.

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steploch

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4 hours ago

In 2021, the DRC alone mined more than 70% of the global supply of cobalt while the U.S. mined just 0.4% of the world's cobalt, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The DRC also has an estimated 3.5 million metric tons of cobalt reserves, the largest amount in the world.

So how much cobalt is needed for just one electric car ? multiplied by millions of EV'S ??

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o **ohiocons**

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3 hours ago

We're a little late to the party. China already owns about 80% of the DRC cobalt production facilities.

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↳ 2 replies

R **rcranger**

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2 hours ago

And how much conscripted child labor is required in the process? Total insanity.

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B **bostonmrk**

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3 hours ago

*"The vast majority of mining and processing of such materials, though, takes place outside the U.S., making the nation more reliant on foreign minerals despite its large domestic resources."*

Remember when we told Germany not to buy fossil fuel from Russia? Well, they shut down nuke plants and did it anyway. Now they are tearing down wind turbines and expanding coal production. This is what happens when you follow the Democrat's Green New Deal.

Reply •  19  • Share

↳ 1 reply

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**jackielope**

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4 hours ago

Much of the lithium, cobalt, and copper needed for "green" energy is acquired by strip mining. But you won't hear any protests from environmentalists.

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J **jlk409**

3 hours ago

Just follow the money. Whoever's funding these green energy politicians are the ones whos' businesses are making the most money off of it.

Reply ·  31  1 · Share

↳ 4 replies

c **CatManDoo275**

3 hours ago

Exactly. There is a price for everything. Sadly they all hide the price if it's against their narrative

Reply ·  14  1 · Share

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D **dogman6**

3 hours ago

The laborers are paid the equivalent of \$2 (US) a day. One must be at least 4 years of age to work. Congo does not have the capacity to refine the mined material. It is shipped to China to be refined.

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