Recommendations for the Ethical Production of Rare Earth Elements

Consumers Group

Prepared in Advance of the Summit

Main Concerns of the Consumers Group:

- Transparency about the mining and production process of rare earth elements should be ensured to help consumers make informed choices and hold corporations to a higher standard of social and environmental responsibility.
- Although recycling and reuse of rare earths are often brushed off as expensive and inefficient, innovations in the recycling and reuse of these elements should be incentivized to increase sustainability and create a more stable supply.
- When supplies of rare earths become limited, prices for consumer products may increase, while some consumer products may become unavailable. Producing rare earths in multiple countries in different parts of the world would make the supply chain for consumer products more stable.

Recommendations Based on Consumers Group Concerns:

- Producers and manufacturers should track the chain of custody of rare earth materials so that consumers can trust they are buying products not made in socially exploitative or environmentally destructive ways.
- Producers and manufacturers should commit to investing in systems to recycle or reuse components made with rare earth metals.
- Manufacturers should agree that certified products will be built so they can be reasonably repaired or upgraded with removable components. For a manufactured product to receive the Sustainability Seal, consumers must also have the legal right to repair it.
- Manufacturers should commit to taking back their products when consumers have finished with them and to recycling or disposing of the products in nonharmful ways.