

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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May 17, 2012

The Honorable Mary L. Schapiro
Chairman
Securities and Exchange Commission
100 F Street NE
Washington, DC 20549

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CHAIRMAN'S
CORRESPONDENCE UNIT

Dear Chairman Schapiro:

We write to urge the Securities and Exchange Commission to promptly issue and implement strong rules required by the Conflict Minerals Provision (Section 1502) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (P.L. 111-203).

Section 1502 was included in the legislation to stop conflict minerals – including gold, tin, tantalum, and tungsten – from entering the U.S. supply chain by requiring transparency and accountability. Specifically, it requires certain companies to attest to the source of minerals derived from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and neighboring countries, as well as document the measures taken to determine whether they are conflict free.

The absence of strong and binding rules regulating trade in these mineral resources continues to fuel sexual- and gender-based violence in the DRC, which U.N. Special Representative Margot Wallstrom has called the 'rape capital of the world.' This is an exceedingly complicated issue with multiple perspectives, not the least of which is the prevention – to the greatest degree possible – of ongoing mineral-financed militia activity in the DRC by groups that have routinely turned to rape and child conscription.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has defended its pace in finalizing Section 1502 rules, citing the need to complete an adequate 'cost-benefit' analysis. While we recognize the importance of carefully drafting these rules, we remain concerned with delays that jeopardize the safety of countless individuals and the moral integrity of American businesses.

It is important to note that the private sector is moving forward on this issue. For instance, Intel Corporation has completed on-site reviews of more than 40 smelters worldwide, including an on-the-ground examination of the extractives and minerals trade in the DRC. Intel has partnered with the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to establish a Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade. As a result, by 2013, the company aims to have built the first verifiably conflict free microprocessor. The responsible corporate leadership epitomized by Intel with respect to the 'conflict minerals' trade demonstrates a way forward that is both replicable and remunerative.

We strongly urge you to avoid further delay and implement clear, strong, and effective rules to carry out Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Act.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



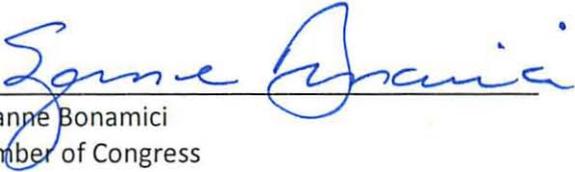
Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
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Kurt Schrader
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