

NEWS RELEASE – July 13, 2026

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2026 Mineral Consumption Data Released

MEC's Newest Mineral Baby Infographic Reflects Importance of Ongoing Domestic Minerals Push



Learn more: MineralsEducationCoalition.org

*only partial use amount made public

Denver, CO - Compiled by the Minerals Education Coalition (MEC), the [2026 Mineral Baby](#) details the estimated amount of minerals, metals and fuels that an American born this year will use in their lifetime. Compared to last year, increases were observed in key resources such as cement, coal, copper, iron ore, lead, lithium, salt, zinc, and silver, which among many applications is a conductor that makes solar energy possible. Overall, the total amount of

resources that every American born in 2026 will need in their lifetime is 3.01 million pounds, clearly demonstrating how critical mining and minerals are to our daily lives.

“Most people do not realize just how often minerals and metals show up in everyday life—from the roads we drive on and the phones we use to the tools and technology that support modern medicine,” said Melissa Russell, SME Executive Director and CEO. “The Mineral Baby is a simple way to start that conversation, take a deeper dive into the data, and help people see why these resources are so important. We encourage you to share this flyer as an educational resource for all audiences, including those looking to join the mining workforce.”

Governments worldwide continue to rely on the extraction and processing of natural resources to ensure a high standard of living for their citizens. In the United States, there is an ongoing push to develop a strategy around the mining and processing of the critical minerals needed to diversify the energy economy and decrease reliance on foreign imports.

According to the 2026 U.S. Geological Survey Mineral Commodity Summaries, “Minerals remained fundamental to the U.S. economy, contributing to the real gross domestic product at several levels, including mining, processing, and manufacturing finished products.” Per their data, in 2025, the estimated total value of nonfuel mineral production in the United States was \$112 billion, an increase of 6% over the 2024 total.

For decades, the amount of minerals, metals and fuels that an American born in the current year will need in their lifetime has been presented in an iconic educational infographic known as the “Mineral Baby.” Mineral Baby infographics are created using statistics from the National Mining Association and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in combination with life expectancy data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Centers for Disease Control. These statistics represent an entire year and thus utilize figures from the previous year.

For more information, visit mineralseducationcoalition.org/stats.

About SME

The Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration (SME) brings together the mining and mineral industry's brightest and most dedicated professionals. Over 14,000 global members advance their careers with the world-class technical resources, educational programs, networking opportunities and professional development tools from SME. Our members are focused on sharing best practices for safety, environmental stewardship and moving mining forward. SME. *Inspiring mining professionals worldwide.*

About MEC

The Minerals Education Coalition (MEC) is the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration Foundation's designated program to develop and deliver accurate and timely K-12 education materials and activities and conduct public awareness outreach about mining and minerals.