Local Opinion: America's energy future is green - Arizona Daily Star, The (Tucson, AZ) - March 19, 2021
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The following column is the opinion and analysis of the writer:

America's energy future is green. Electric vehicles are projected to overtake gasoline-powered cars by 2040. And with new government incentives for renewable energy production and electric vehicles, the speed of the transition will only accelerate.

That green future, however, is simply not possible without **copper**. From solar panels to electric vehicles, the products of tomorrow depend on **copper**'s highly efficient and stable energy conduction.

Meanwhile, the United States does not produce enough **copper** to support current domestic needs, let alone the rapid growth of the green energy economy. We are already using almost 40% more **copper** than we produce, and that gap will only increase without an increase in domestic production.

In fact, the World Bank has predicted that demand for **copper** could increase 10 times over by 2050 due to increased demand from the renewable energy sector, which can use up to 12 times more **copper** than traditional energy production.

Unless we rapidly increase domestic **copper** extraction efforts, the U.S. will be left vulnerable to the shifting realities of foreign trade, putting our market at risk for price hikes, geopolitical disruptions and unfair trading practices.

Rapidly increasing global demand for **copper** will lead to spiking prices, and countries that are unable to meet their own needs will be forced to pay ever-rising rates.

We've seen this before. Think of the 1973 oil crisis. The impacts on America's economy were devastating.

The national security implications of relying on foreign powers are also a major concern. The shift to renewables and electrification, without a corresponding increase in U.S. **copper** mining, will exacerbate these economic and national security risks.

Domestic **copper** mining will also return control over environmental impacts of the mining process to the United States. Carbon emissions are a global problem, and relying on foreign mining means that the U.S. has little ability to ensure that extraction is performed safely and sustainably.

Some **copper**-producing countries have substandard regulatory environments that can result in environmental damage and inefficient use of resources, which is clearly counterproductive to the holistic goals of the green energy movement.

And that's not all. American consumers have shown time and time again that they consider not only environmental, but also social impacts when making purchasing decisions.

Under-regulated mining is often dangerous and can lead to a serious human cost in parts of the world where worker safety is not valued and protected. Modern markets rightfully favor responsible production of everything from coffee to diamonds to T-shirts, and minerals will be no different.

Domestic **copper** extraction will not only create new, well-paying American jobs, but will also promote fair, safe labor practices around the world.

Arizona has been America's largest **copper** supplier since the 19th century — and today the state's abundant natural resources are more important than ever.

While Arizona already produces over 60% of America's **copper** output, the state's untapped potential is vast enough to turn the tide away from reliance on foreign minerals.

Projects like Florence **Copper** and **Rosemont Copper** will help put Arizona on par with major **copper**-producing countries and support a sustainable energy future.

And there's no time to waste. The climate is changing, demand for renewable energy solutions is skyrocketing, and domestic production isn't keeping up. But a sustainable future is still possible — and it starts with Arizona's **copper**.