

# St. Louis Post-Dispatch

## Sen. Bond backs bill supporting rare earth production

By Lisa Brown

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Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond, R-Mo., who gave his farewell speech on the Senate floor Tuesday, hasn't quite packed his pens and papers away just yet.



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**Oct. 28, 2010 -- Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond listens to a briefing from James Kennedy, president of Wings Enterprises and owner of the Pea Ridge Mine south of Sullivan, Mo. Kennedy was showing Sen. Bond some of the metals he plans to extract from the mine.**

Bond, who is leaving office on Jan. 2 after four terms in the U.S. Senate, co-sponsored a bill Wednesday that would support funding for domestic rare earth element production. Sen. Evan Bayh, D-

Ind., sponsored the bill. Bayh also is leaving office in January. Bond said in October that he would introduce legislation to provide federal support of domestic production of rare earth elements while visiting the Pea Ridge mine near Sullivan.

St. Louis County-based Wings Enterprises owns the Pea Ridge mine and is in the process of reopening it to produce iron ore and rare earth elements. Rare earth elements are currently produced almost entirely in China.

"It is critical that we have a domestic source of rare earth minerals, a necessary component for a number of technologies that Americans are increasingly dependent on - from cell phones to MRI machines to smart bombs to hybrid car engines," Bond wrote on his website.

Senate Bill 4031 would fund a feasibility study for building a cooperative refinery for rare earth elements somewhere in the U.S., and provide \$50 million in funding to boost the rare earth supply chain. When Bond visited Pea Ridge in October, he said the site could be a good location for a co-op. On Wednesday, the bill was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

On Friday, Bond's Communications Director Shana Marchio said the bill will have to be reintroduced in the new Congress next year.

"A number of members have expressed interest in the issue" including Senators Tom Coburn, R-Okla., Al Franken, D-Minn., and Max Baucus, D-Mont., who have rare earth deposits in their states, Marchio said in an email.

Marchio said Bond also has discussed rare earth elements with Sen.-elect Roy Bunt, R-Mo.

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