

Opportunities for Enabling the Use of Coal as a Precursor for Value-Added Products

Edgar Lara-Curzio
Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Unites States Energy Association
August 9, 2018

The Beginning: Einstein's Letter

Albert Einstein
Old Grove Rd.
Massau Point
Peconic, Long Island

August 2nd, 1939

F.D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States,
White House
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem

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1939

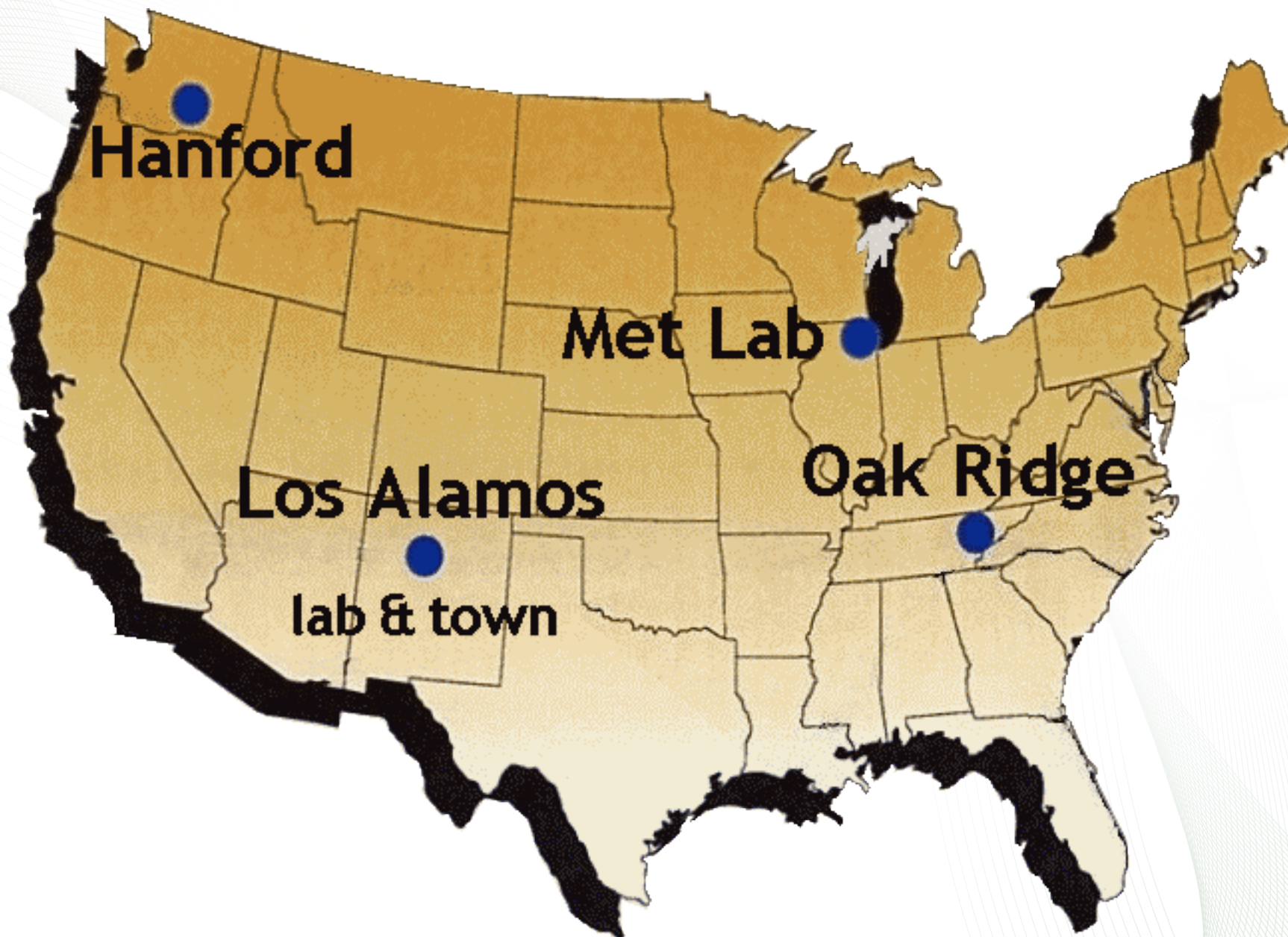
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transportation by

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ab4a01

August 1939

Places of the Manhattan Project



Oak Ridge National Laboratory evolved from the Manhattan Project



The Clinton Pile was the world's first continuously operated nuclear reactor

Chemical processing techniques were developed to separate plutonium from irradiated fuel

Office of Science Laboratories

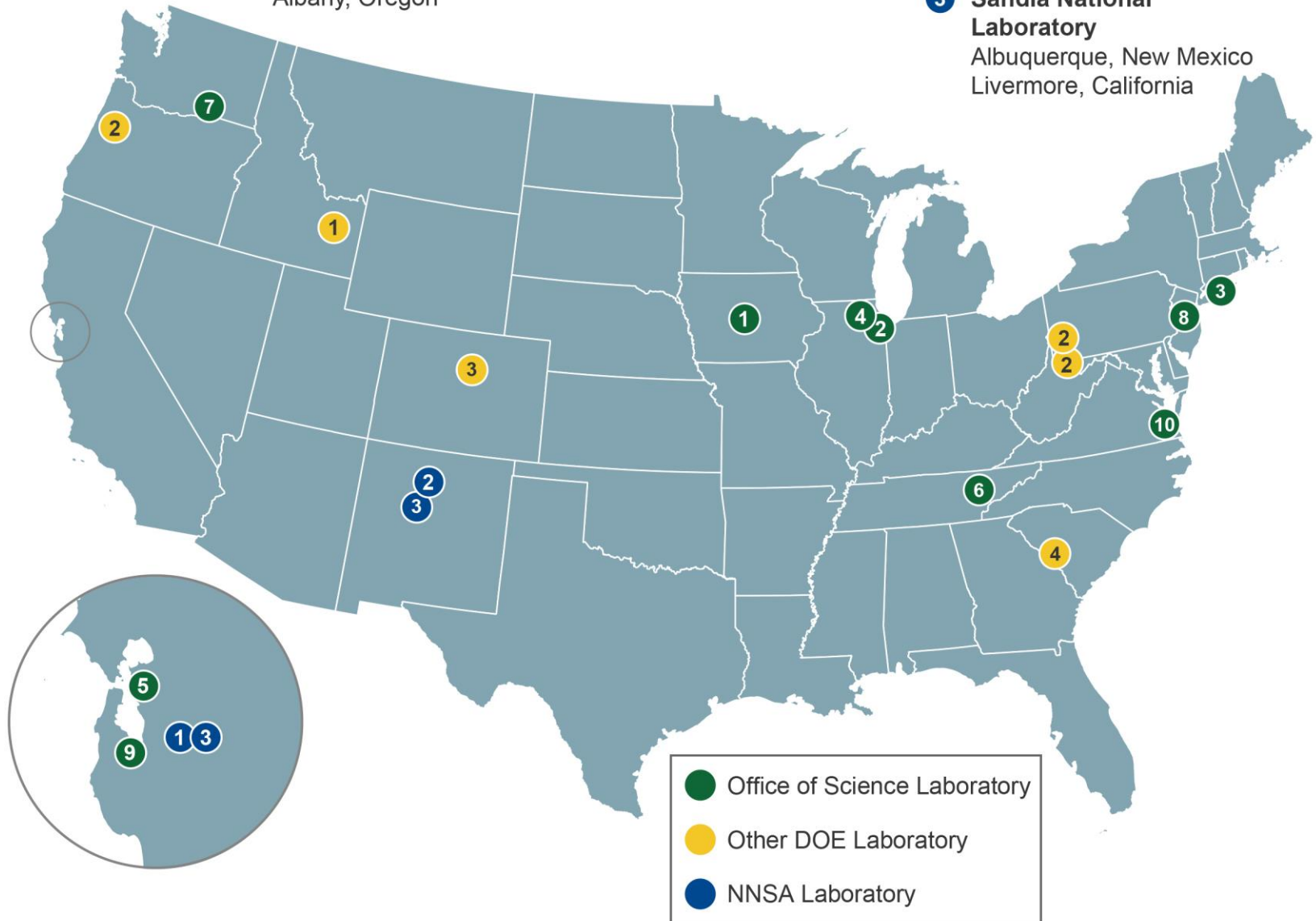
- 1 Ames Laboratory**
Ames, Iowa
- 2 Argonne National Laboratory**
Argonne, Illinois
- 3 Brookhaven National Laboratory**
Upton, New York
- 4 Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory**
Batavia, Illinois
- 5 Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**
Berkeley, California
- 6 Oak Ridge National Laboratory**
Oak Ridge, Tennessee
- 7 Pacific Northwest National Laboratory**
Richland, Washington
- 8 Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory**
Princeton, New Jersey
- 9 SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory**
Menlo Park, California
- 10 Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility**
Newport News, Virginia

Other DOE Laboratories

- 1 Idaho National Laboratory**
Idaho Falls, Idaho
- 2 National Energy Technology Laboratory**
Morgantown, West Virginia
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Albany, Oregon
- 3 National Renewable Energy Laboratory**
Golden, Colorado
- 4 Savannah River National Laboratory**
Aiken, South Carolina

NNSA Laboratories

- 1 Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory**
Livermore, California
- 2 Los Alamos National Laboratory**
Los Alamos, New Mexico
- 3 Sandia National Laboratory**
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Livermore, California



ORNL's mission

Deliver scientific discoveries and technical breakthroughs that will accelerate the development and deployment of solutions in clean energy and global security, and in doing so create economic opportunity for the nation

Signature strengths

Computational science and engineering

Materials science and engineering

Neutron science and technology

Nuclear science and technology



ORNL innovations have had billion dollar impacts



\$1B domestic investment in additive manufacturing

Fueleconomy.gov: \$1B in fuel cost savings

New gas turbine composite material

Lab-on-a-chip: Caliper sold for \$0.6B

Cesium extraction: Basis for \$1.3B waste processing

Reactor life extension: \$20B cost avoidance

Advanced alloys: Chrome-moly steel in widespread use

Ion implantation: Integrated circuits and medical implants

Cryopreservation (mouse embryos): Frozen embryo (livestock reproduction)

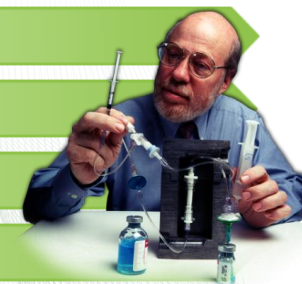
Centrifuge technology: Basis for vaccine purification and US enrichment industry

Instrumentation: >\$1B in products and spinoffs from ORTEC and TENNELEC

Reactor technology: Concept technology for light water, high temperature, molten salt reactors

PUREX: Basis for nuclear fuel reprocessing techniques used worldwide

Radioisotopes: Multibillion dollar industry (>100 million procedures per year)



1940s

Today

ORNL innovations have had billion dollar impacts



Coal-to-High Value-Added Products

Lab-on-a-chip: Caliper sold for \$0.6B

Coal Power Plant Life Extension Enabled by Data Analytics, HPC, Advanced Materials and Thermal Storage Solutions

Ion implantation: Integrated circuits and medical implants

Cryopreservation (mouse embryos): Frozen embryo (livestock reproduction)

Centrifuge technology: Basis for vaccine purification and US enrichment industry

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Today

1940s

8

8

The Rare Earth Minerals Crisis

HOME SEARCH

The New York Times

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

China Weighs Tighter Controls on Rare Elements

By *Chinese Leader Denies Using Mineral Exports for Political Ends*

By *Japan Calls on China to Resume Rare Earth Exports*

By *U.S. Called Vulnerable to Rare Earth Shortages*

By *China Consolidates Grip on Rare Earths*

By KEITH BRADSHER SEPT. 15, 2011

BEIJING — In the name of fighting pollution, [China](#) has sent the price of [compact fluorescent light bulbs](#) soaring in the United States.

Rare Earth Elements

La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71

Y
39

Lanthanides

H																	He	
Li	Be											B	C	N	O	F	Ne	
Na	Mg											Al	Si	P	S	Cl	Ar	
K	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr	
Rb	Sr	Y	Zr	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru	Rh	Pd	Ag	Cd	In	Sn	Sb	Te	I	Xe	
Cs	Ba		Lu	Hf	Ta	W	Re	Os	Ir	Pt	Au	Hg	Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Rn
Fr	Ra	An	Lr															

What are the Rare Earth Elements?

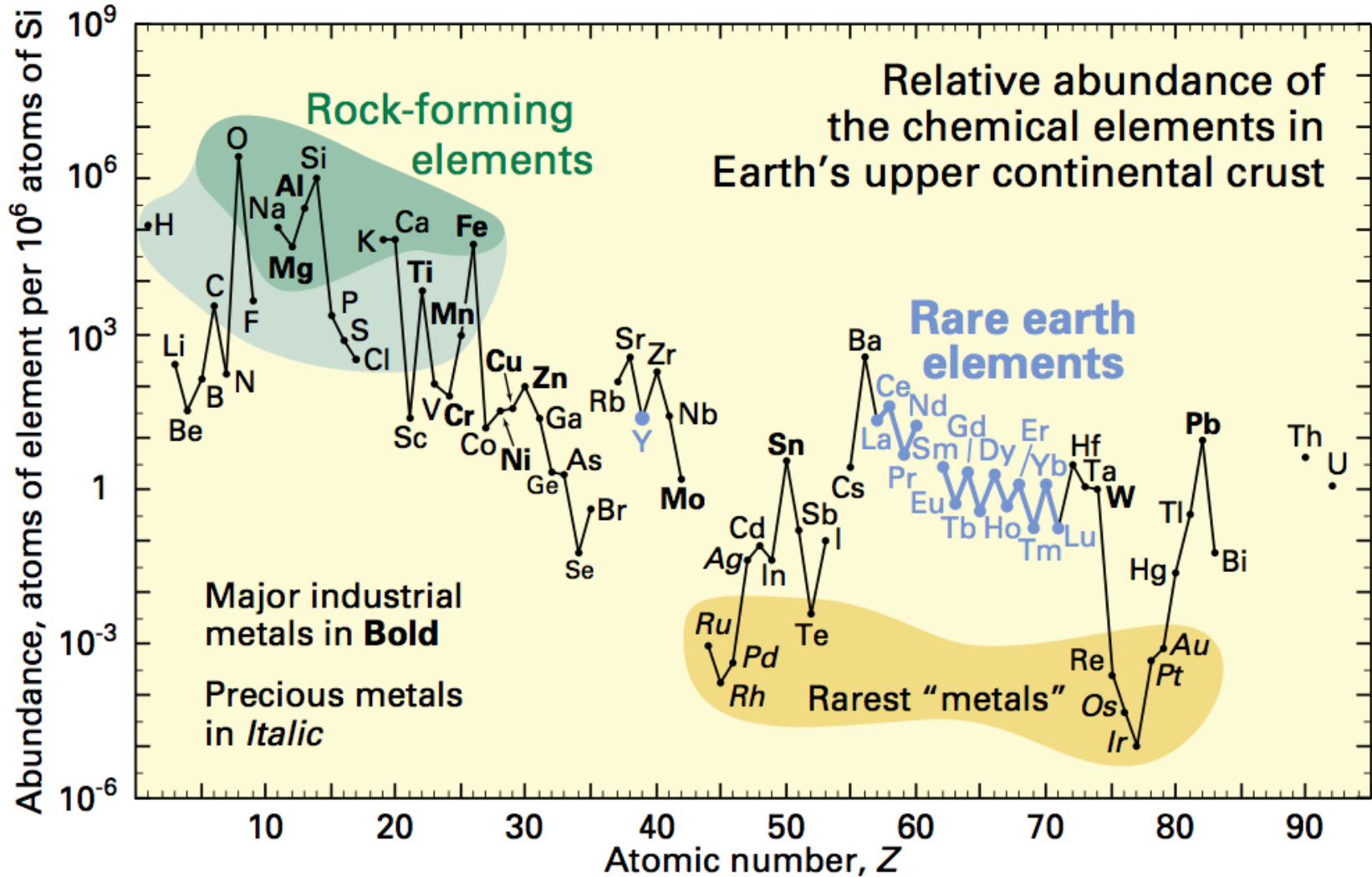
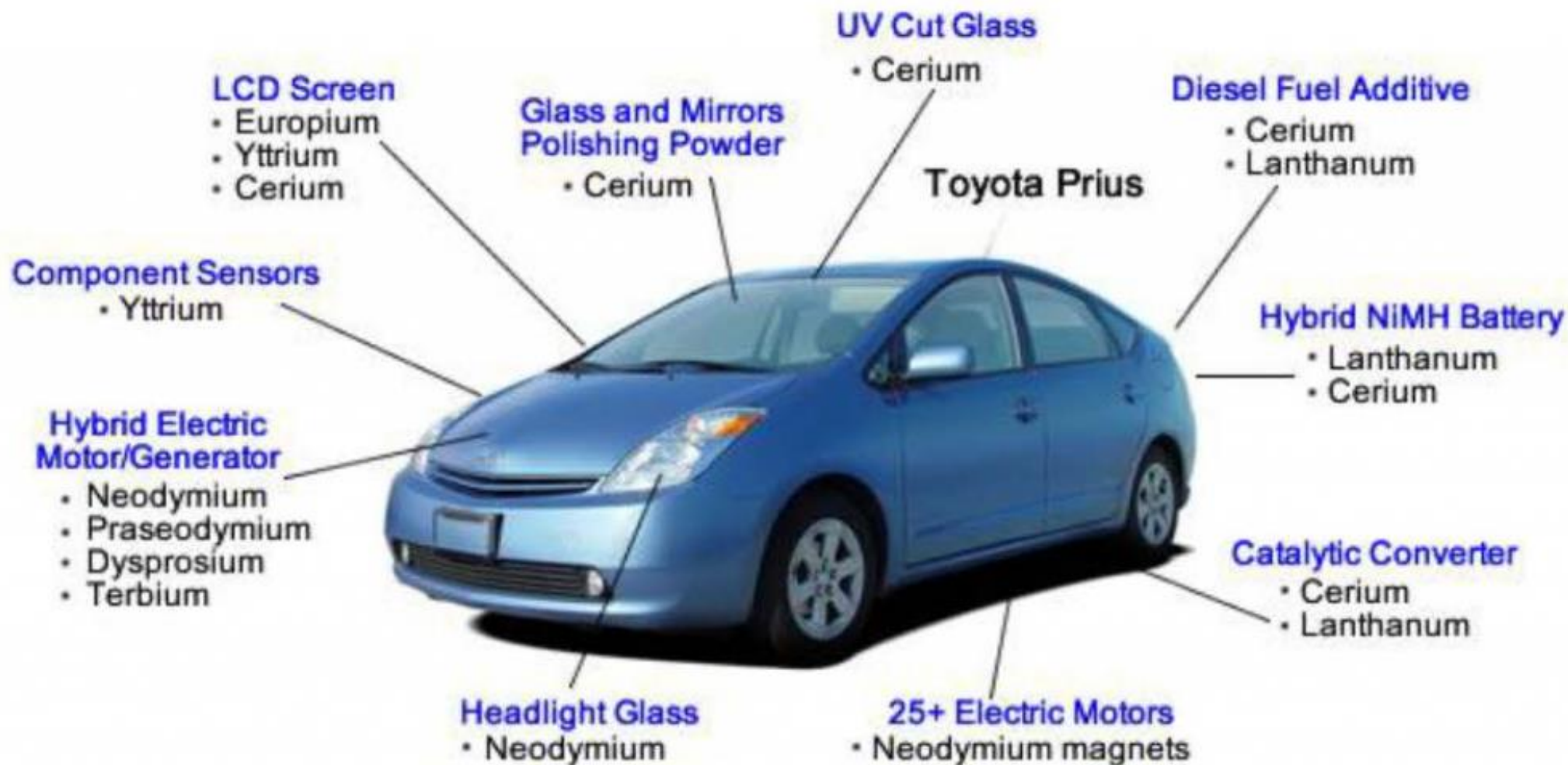


Figure 4. Abundance (atom fraction) of the chemical elements in Earth's upper continental crust as a function of atomic number. Many of the elements are classified into (partially overlapping) categories: (1) rock-forming elements (major elements in green field and minor elements in light green field); (2) rare earth elements (lanthanides, La–Lu, and Y; labeled in blue); (3) major industrial metals (global production $\geq 3 \times 10^7$ kg/year; labeled in bold); (4) precious metals (italic); and (5) the nine rarest "metals"—the six platinum group elements plus Au, Re, and Te (a metalloid).

Rare Earth Elements in Toyota's Prius



Rare Earth Elements in Smartphones

REE in different parts of a phone.
Other scarce elements indicated within brackets.

SPEAKERS

Praseodymium
Neodymium
Gadolinium

COLOUR SCREEN

Yttrium
Europium
Gadolinium
Terbium



CAMERA

Lanthanum
Yttrium

CIRCUITRY

Neodymium
Dysprosium
(Tantalum)

BATTERY

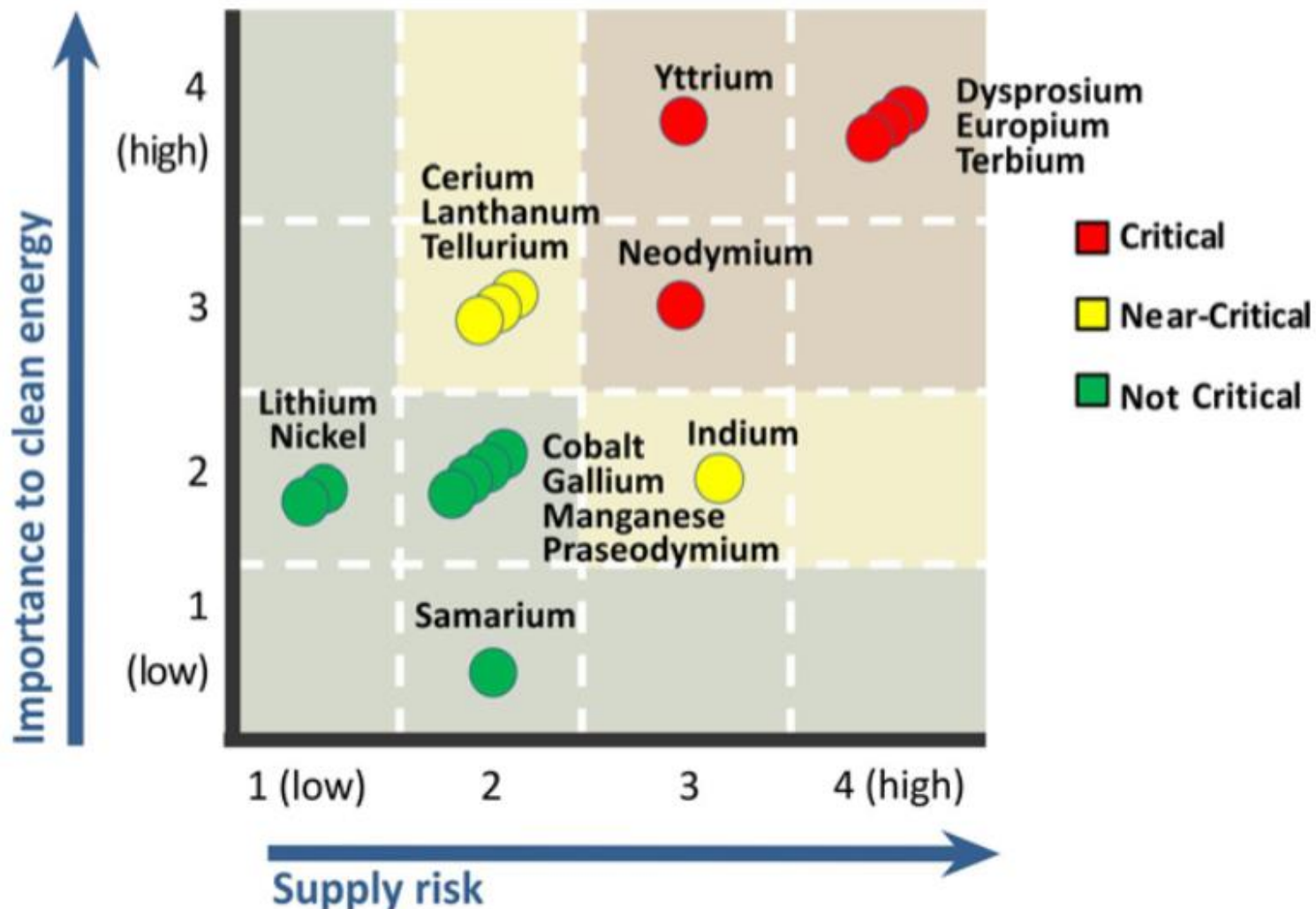
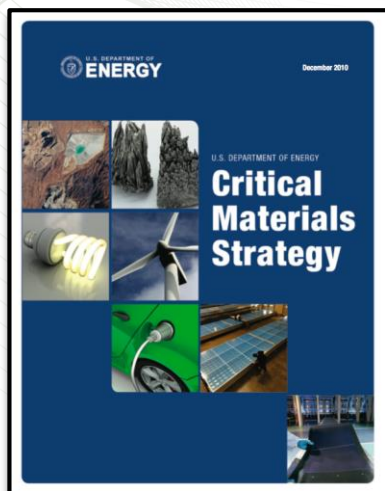
Lanthanum
Praseodymium
(Lithium)



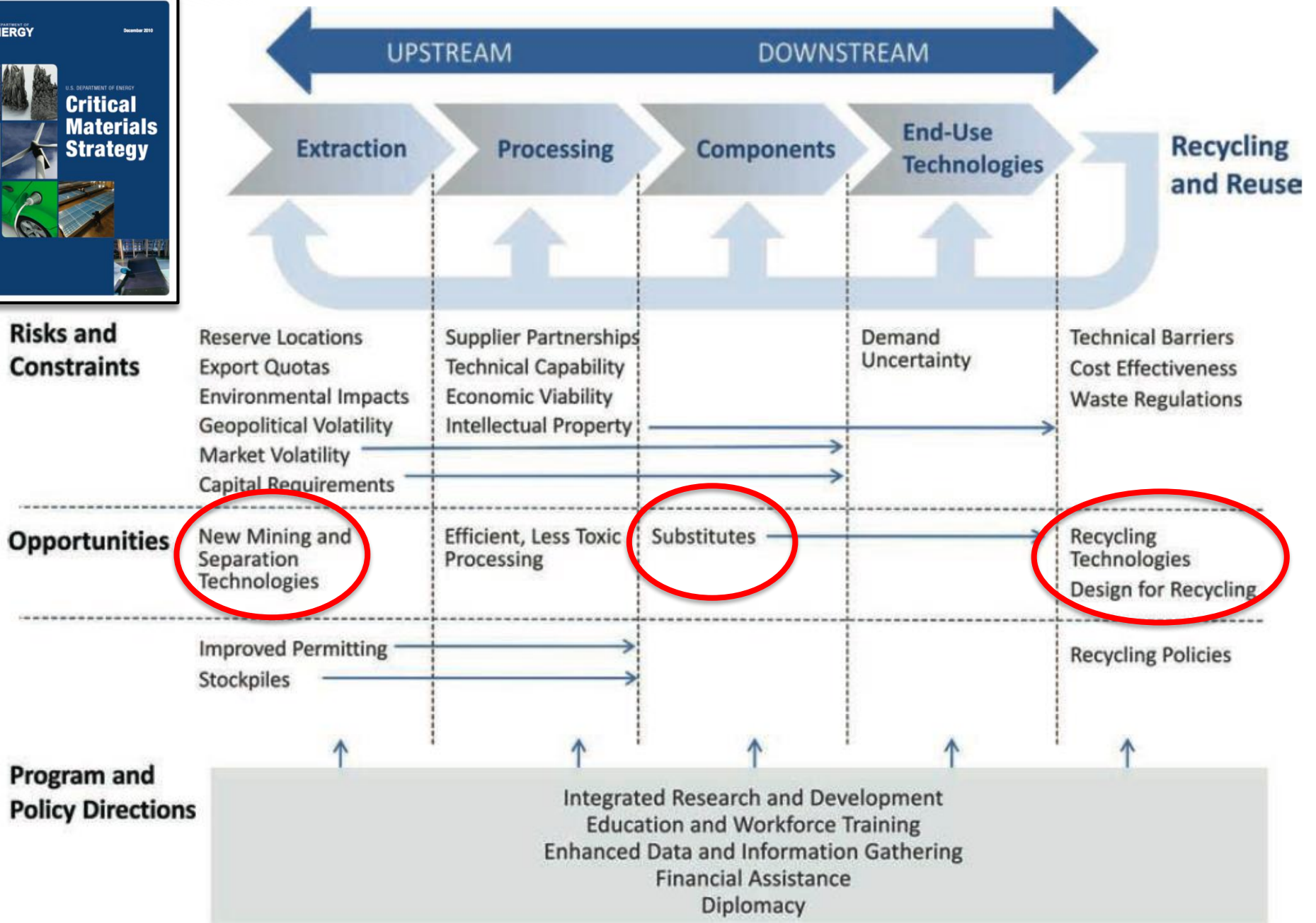
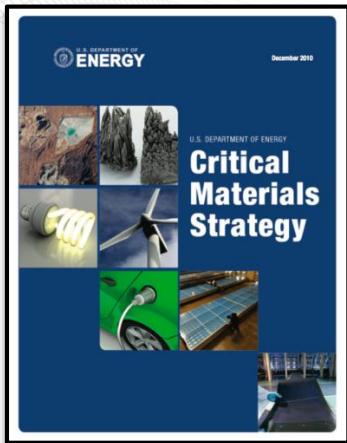
VIBRATION

Neodymium
(Tungsten)

DOE's Critical Materials Strategy (2010)



DOE's Critical Materials Strategy (2010)



DOE's Critical Materials Institute (CMI)

The Ames Laboratory | U.S. Department of Energy



Critical Materials Institute
AN ENERGY INNOVATION HUB

Home CMI Materials Research News

Resources Education Working with CMI



2017 CMI annual meeting brought together leaders and researchers



DOE's Critical Materials Institute (CMI)

The Critical Materials Institute is a partnership of industries, universities and national laboratories that seeks ways to:

- diversify and expand the availability of these materials throughout their supply chain
- to reduce demand by identifying substitutes for critical materials, and
- to reduce wastes by increasing the efficiency of manufacturing and recycling.

After three years, CMI has issued 47 invention disclosures, 13 patent applications, two technology licenses, two open-source software packages, and over 80 refereed publications. Industrial collaborators are incorporating these accomplishments in their products and processes.

DOE's Critical Materials Institute: Team



BROWN



COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES
EARTH • ENERGY • ENVIRONMENT

UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY

RUTGERS
THE STATE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW JERSEY



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Public-Private Partnerships involving the National Laboratories

The Critical Materials Institute is an example of a successful **public-private partnership**, involving the DOE National Laboratories, that is developing innovative solutions to maintain our nation's economic growth and national security.

Rare Earth Elements from Coal and Coal by-Products

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[BUSINESS](#)

Comprising 17 elements from the periodic table, the group known as rare earth elements (REEs) provide significant value to our national security, energy independence, environmental future, and economic growth. REEs are important elements used in high-technology products such as catalysts, cell phones, hard drives, hybrid engines, lasers, magnets, medical devices, televisions, and other applications. The development of an economically competitive domestic supply of REEs will help to maintain our nation's economic growth and national security.



America's vast coal resources contain quantities of REEs that offer the potential to reduce our dependence on others for these critical materials and create new industries in regions where coal has played an important economic role. To support these needs, NETL has created a collaborative R&D program to develop technologies for the recovery of REEs from Coal and Coal By-Products.

Rare Earth Elements from Coal and Coal by-Products

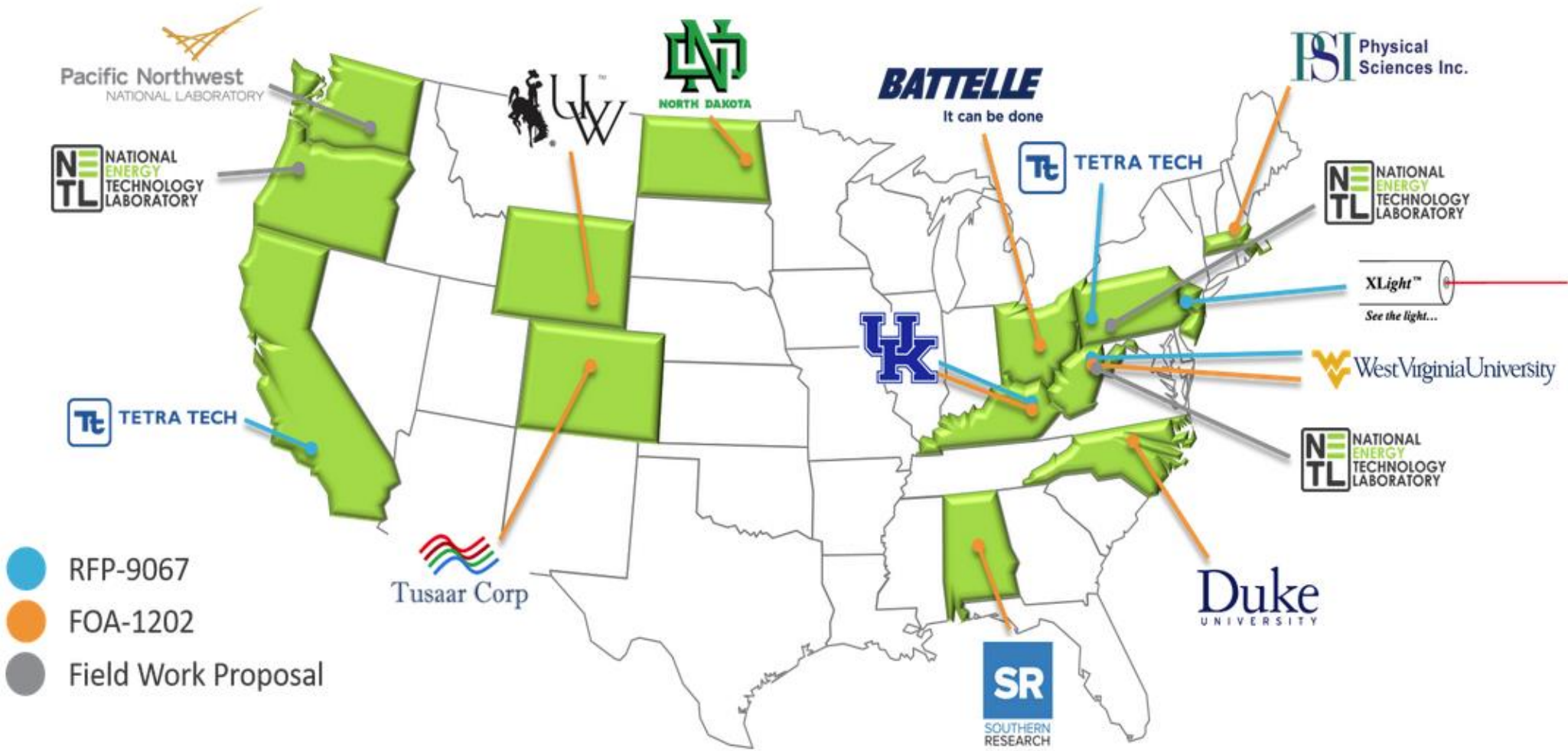


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RESEARCH

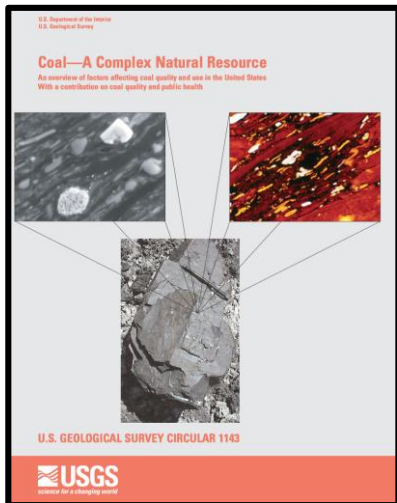
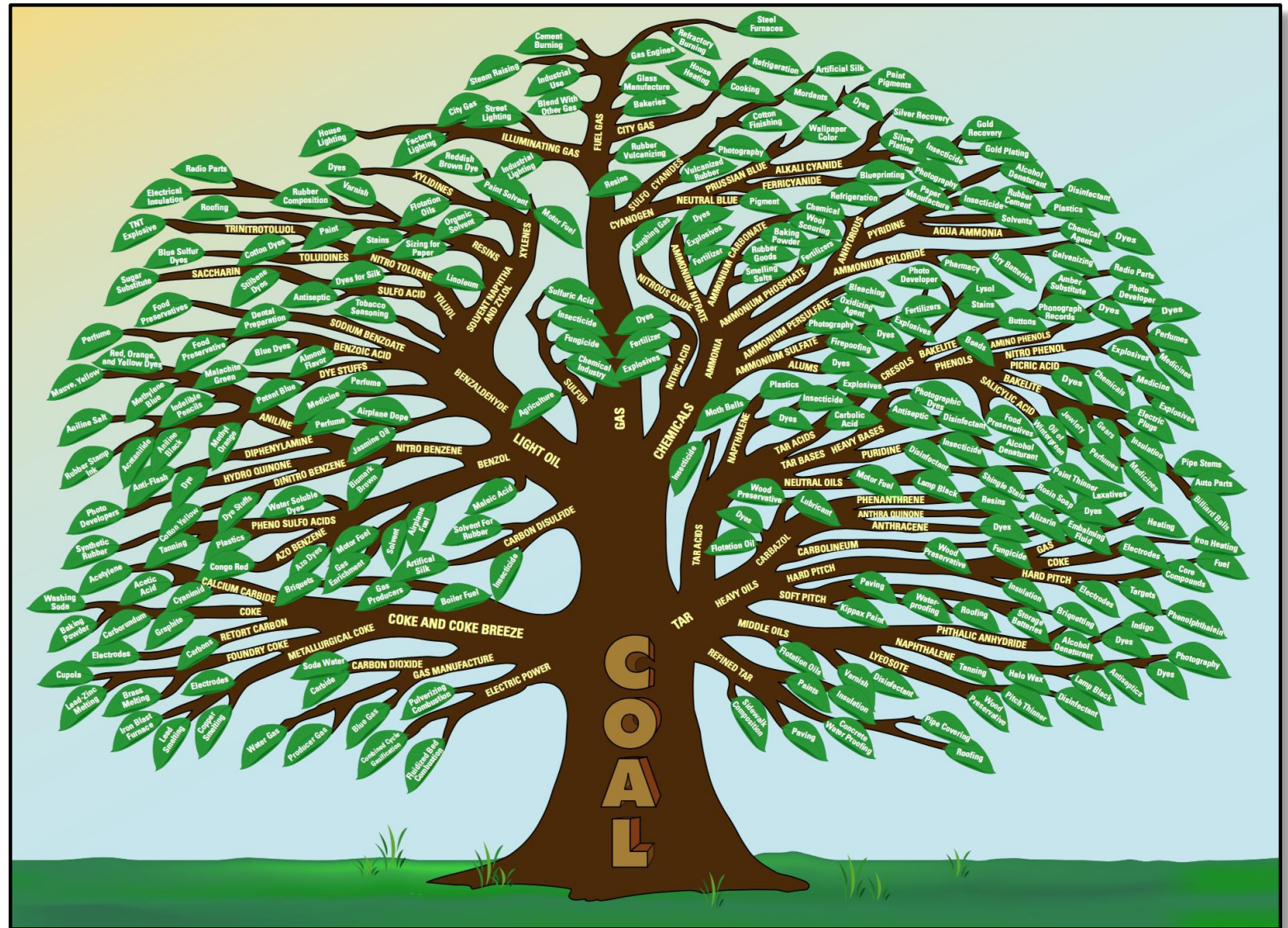
NEWSROOM

BUSINESS



Using Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products

The Idea of Using Coal as a Precursor for Products is not New



Coal—A Complex Natural Resource
 U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1143 (2002)

Lara Curzio, USEA Seminar, August 9, 2018

The Idea of Using Coal as a Precursor for Products is not New

VERKAUFSVEREINIGUNG FÜR TEERERZEUGNISSE G.M.B.H. ESSEN

STEINKOHLE

Produkte der Kohlendestillation

(1921)

Gezeichnet geschützt! Verlag W.G. Irmandt-Essen

COAL PRODUCTS TREE

Showing the products obtainable from coal by carbonization in the modern by-product coke oven

Depression Flower
 Arrange coal in a bowl or flat dish. Mix 6 tablespoons water, 6 tablespoons salt, 6 tablespoons bluing, 1 tablespoon ammonia, and stir until salt dissolves. Pour over coal. Use mercurchrome or food coloring for different hues. Add more of the liquid along to keep it growing.

COMPLIMENTS OF

BECKLEY POST-HERALD **Raleigh Register**

What is new are the capabilities and expertise at National Laboratories and Universities that were not available 15 years ago!!

- **World's fastest supercomputers**
- **Electron microscopes capable of imaging single atoms**
- **High-throughput characterization**
- **Light and neutron sources**

These tools could be used to develop optimized physical and chemical separation processes in a shorter period of time

Not all wines are the same!



SYRAH /
SHIRAZ



BORDEAUX /
CABERNET



TEMPRANILLO /
RIOJA



BURGUNDY /
PINOT NOIR



ZINFANDEL /
CHIANTI



SAUVIGNON
BLANC



RIESLING
(SWEET)



CHABLIS /
CHARDONNAY



MONTRACHET



RIESLING (DRY) /
PINOT GRIGIO



CHAMPAGNE



VINTAGE
CHAMPAGNE



SAUTERNES

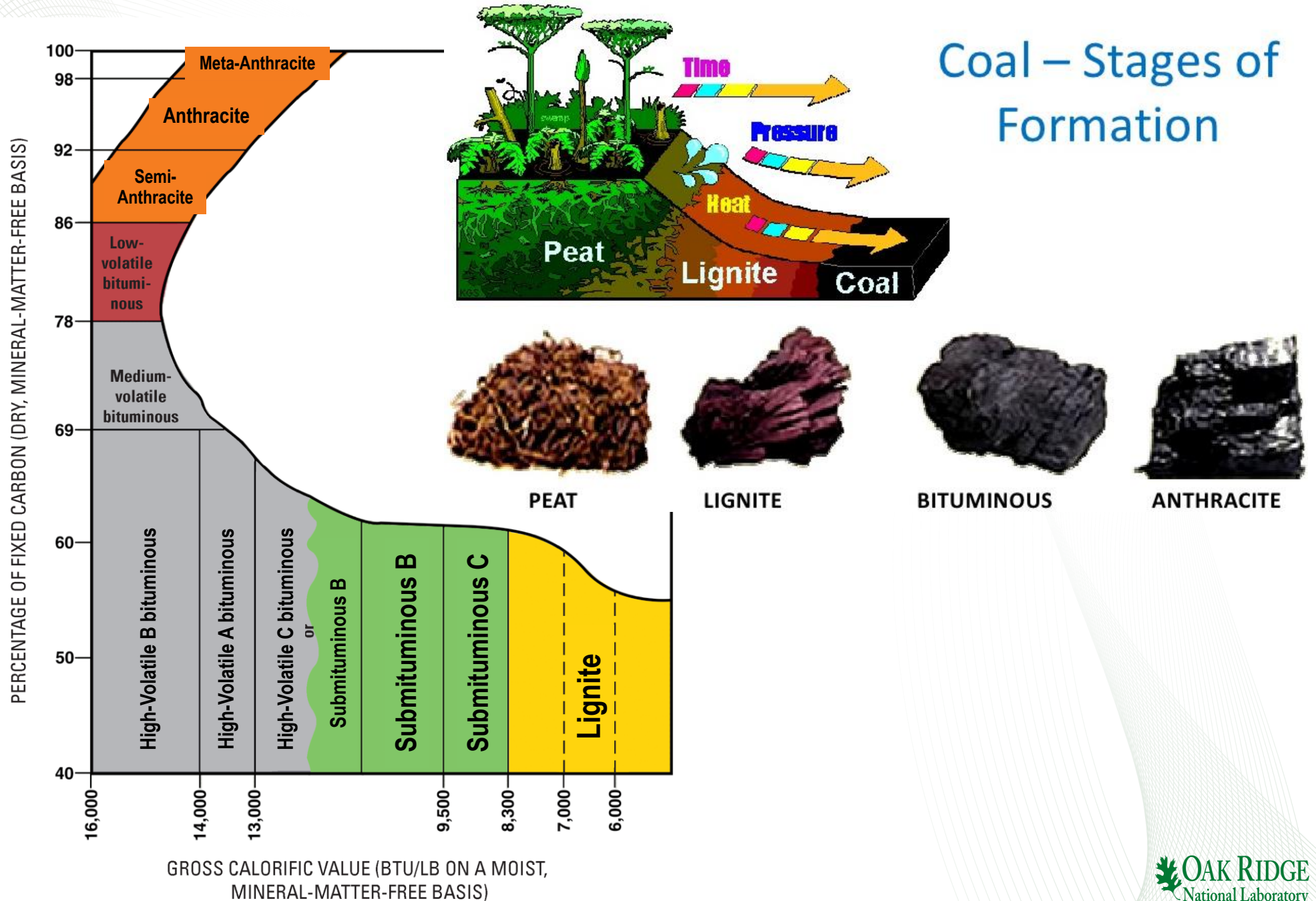


ROSE /
BLUSH



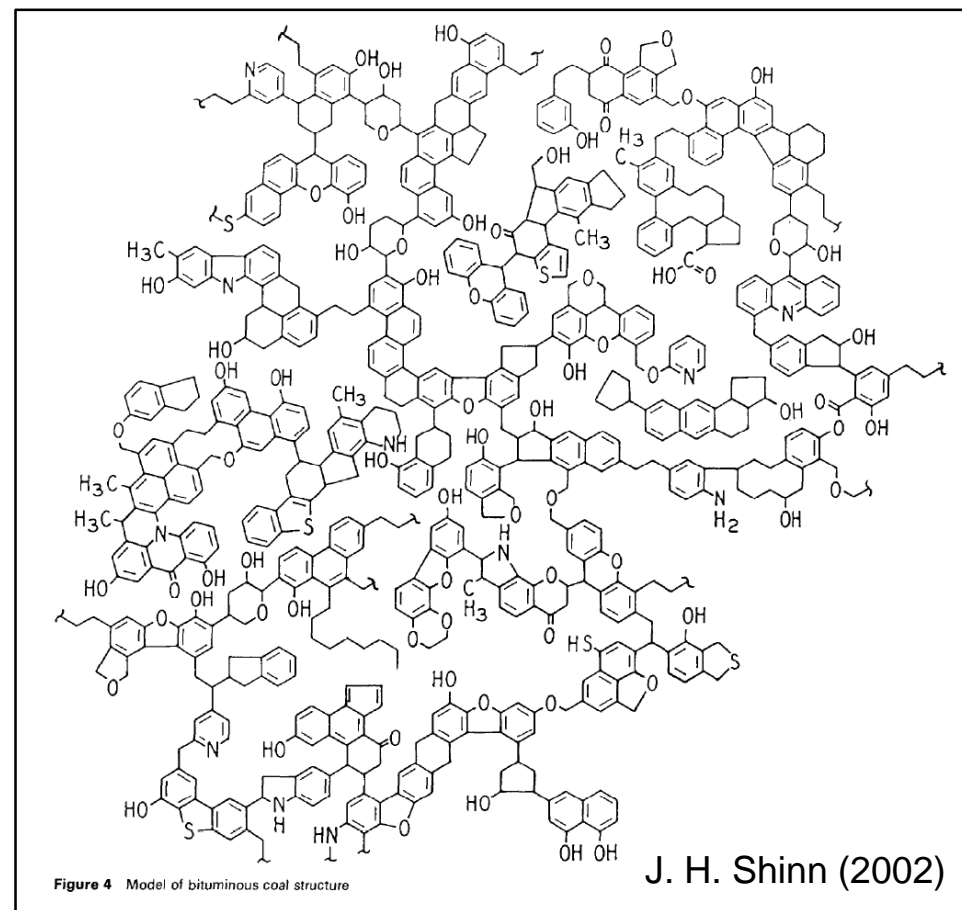
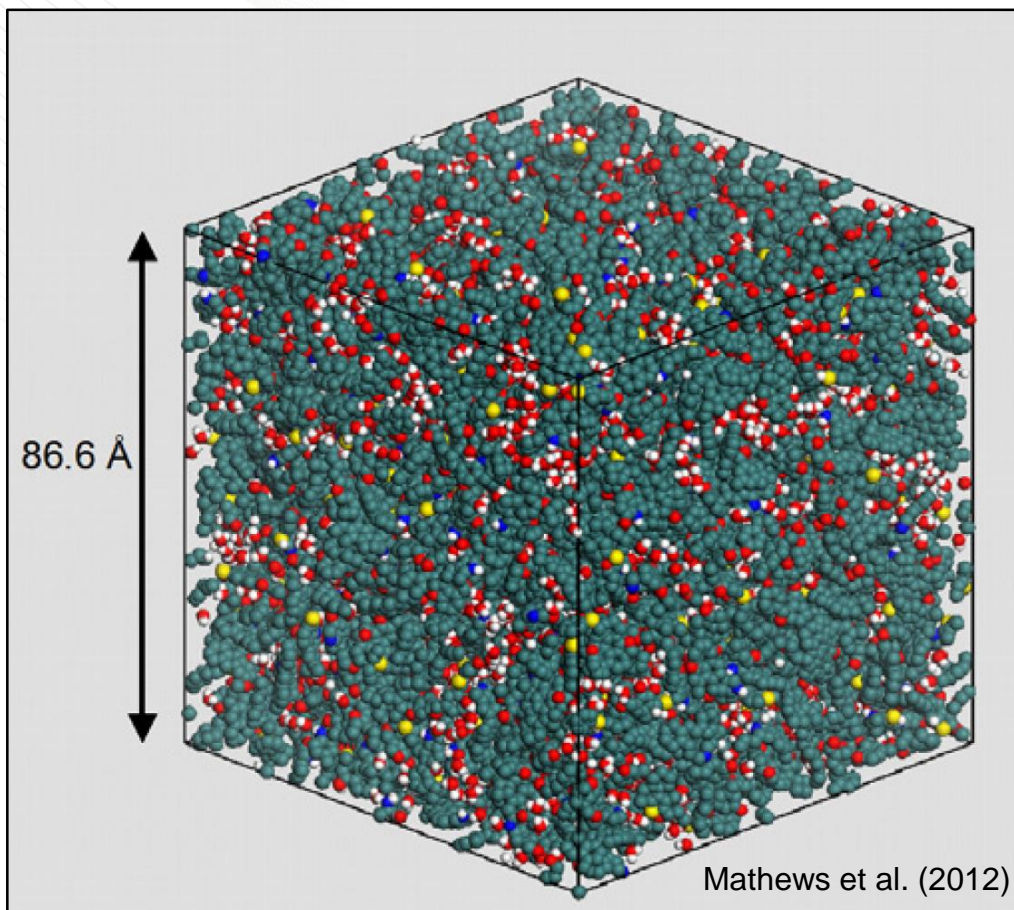
VINTAGE
PORT

Not all coals are the same!

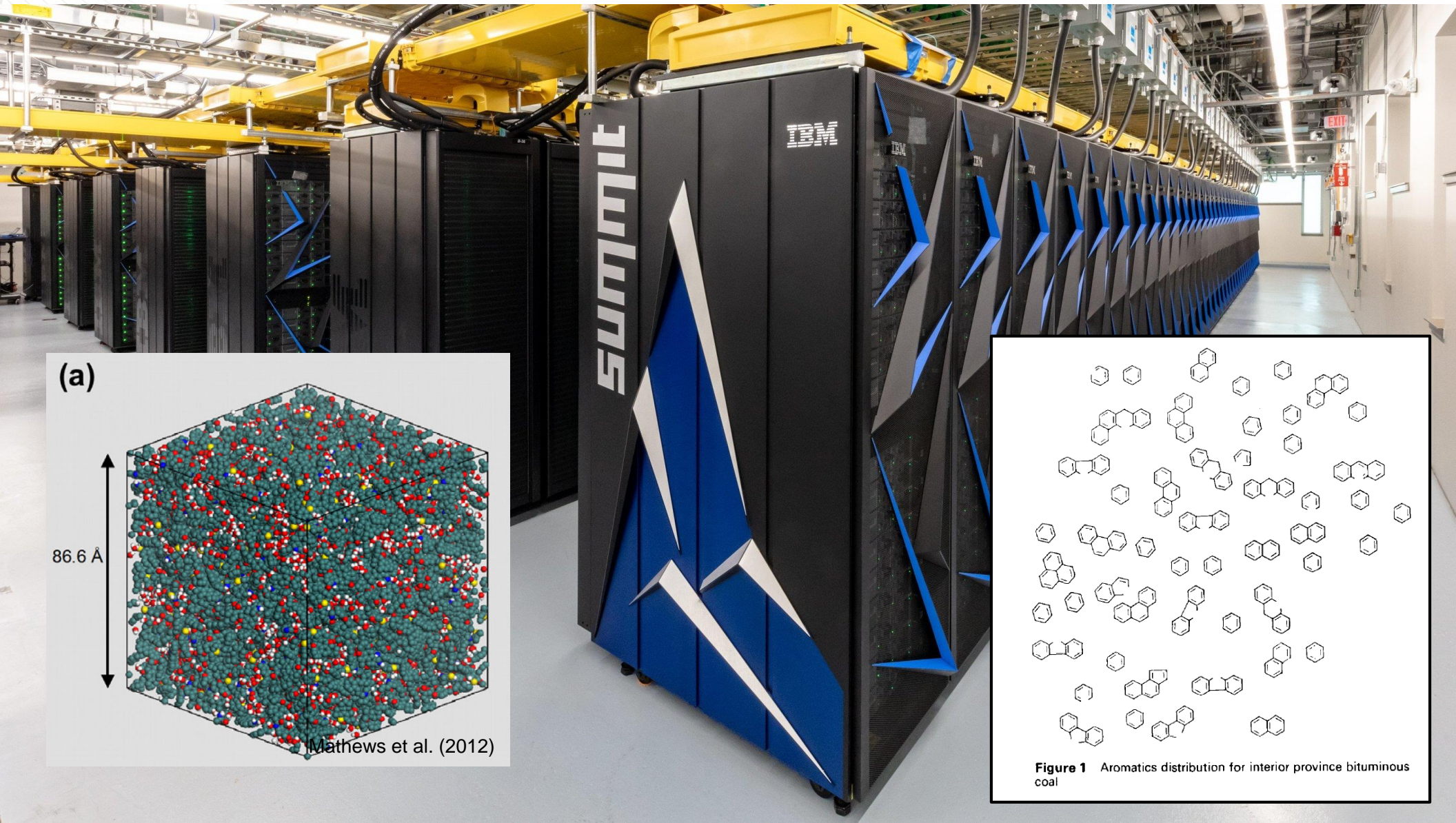


The Molecular Structure of Coal

A Genomic Approach



HPC Applied to Coal Processing: Finding the Most Energetically Favorable Pathways for Breaking down Coal into Products and Precursors



(a)

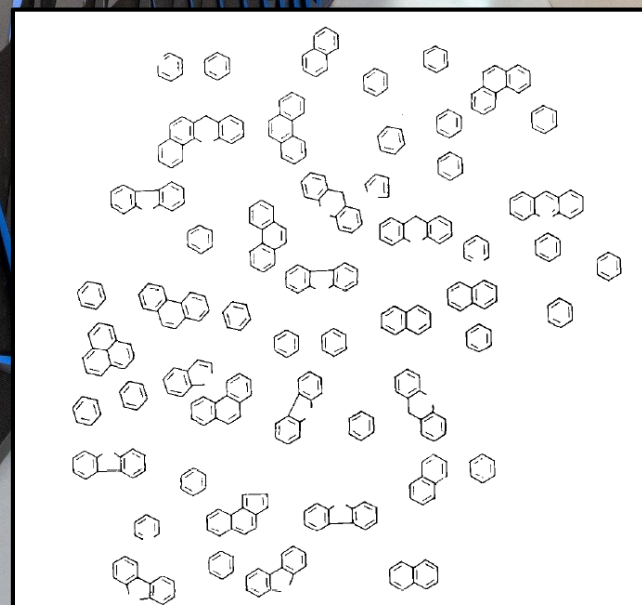
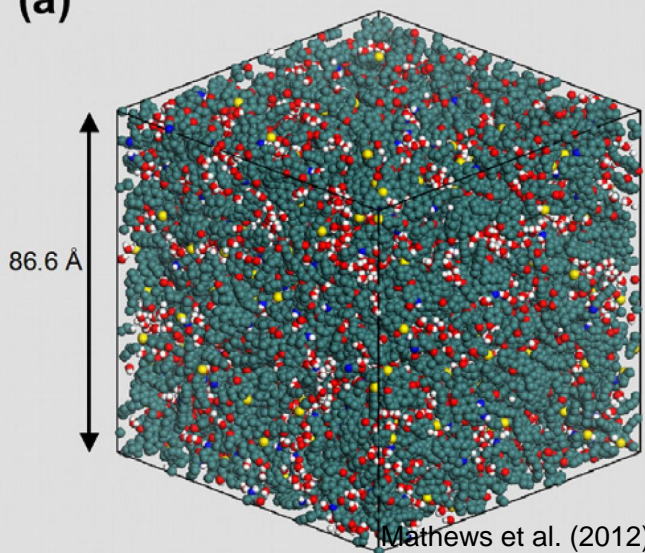
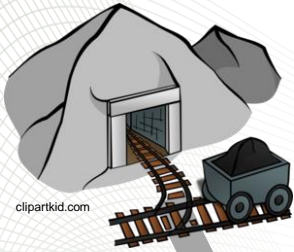
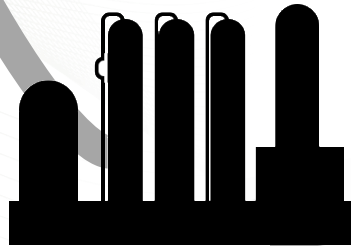


Figure 1 Aromatics distribution for interior province bituminous coal

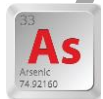
Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



Coal Mine



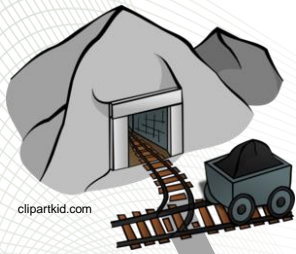
Coal "Refinery"



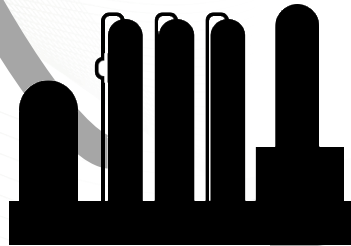
water

Rare Earth Elements														Y	
La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu	39
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	

Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



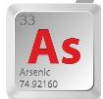
Coal Mine



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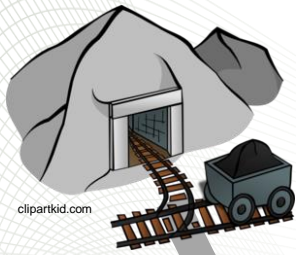
chemicals



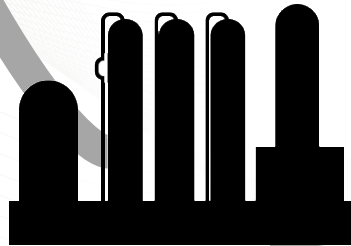
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Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



Coal Mine

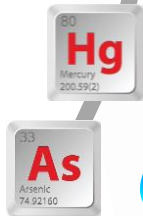


Coal "Refinery"



chemicals

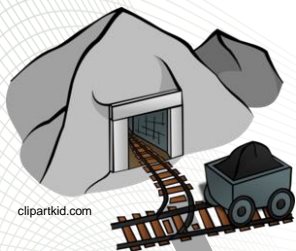
activated carbon



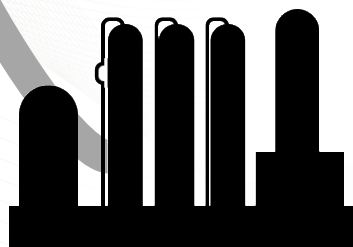
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Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



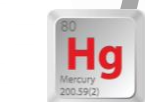
Coal Mine



Coal "Refinery"

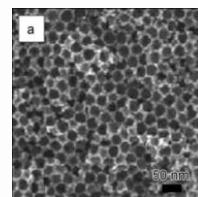


chemicals



water

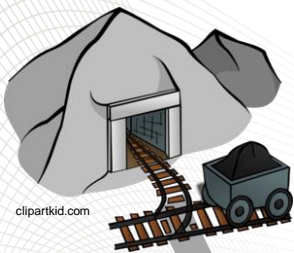
activated carbon



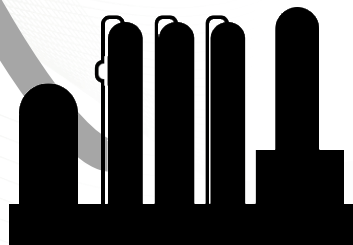
mesoporous carbon

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Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



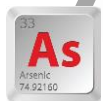
Coal Mine



Coal "Refinery"

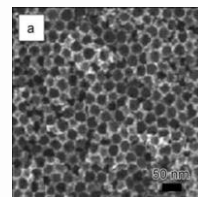


chemicals



water

activated carbon



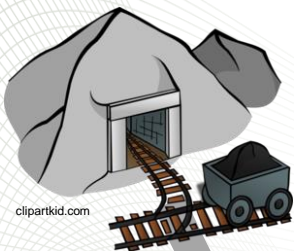
mesoporous carbon

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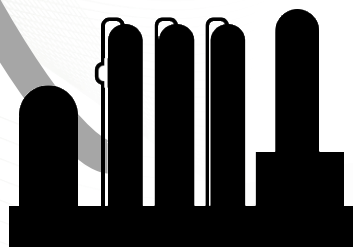


metallurgical coal

Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



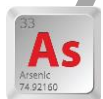
Coal Mine



Coal "Refinery"

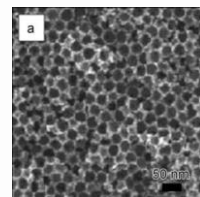


chemicals



water

activated carbon



mesoporous carbon

Rare Earth Elements														Y	
La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu	39
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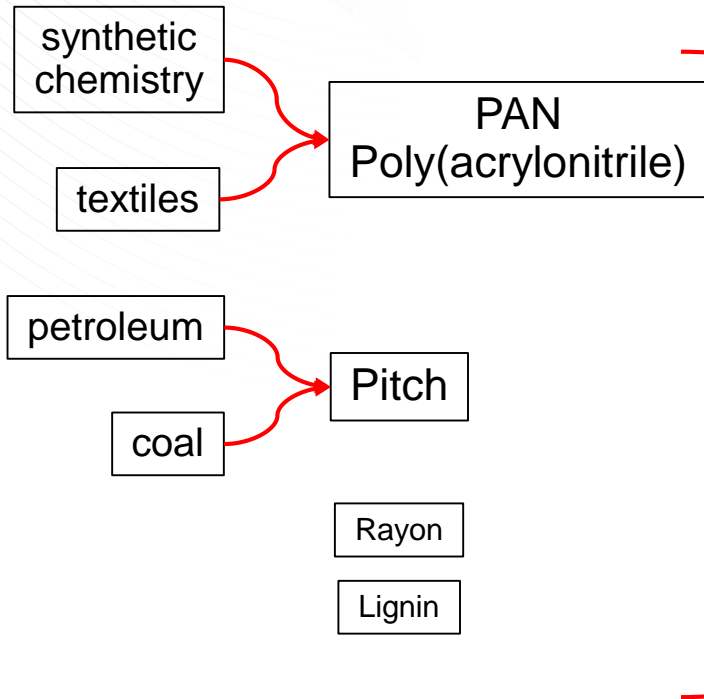
metallurgical coal



carbon fibers

Carbon Fibers

Precursors



1 short ton of coal ~ \$50



value-added

1 short ton of carbon fibers ~ \$18,000
(\$20/kg)



ORNL is developing technologies to reduce the cost of making carbon fibers to \$10-\$14/kg, which would enable widespread utilization in automobiles and trucks

Coal-derived Carbon Fibers have been commercialized

SELECTOR GUIDE

Pitch Fiber

DIALEAD is a high performance coal tar pitch based carbon fiber, available in a large range of product formats from low to ultra high tensile modulus grades.

Continuous

High and Ultra High Tensile Modulus grades suitable for prepegging, filament winding, and weaving.

Chopped Fiber

Widely used in thermoplastic and thermosetting resins to improve electric and thermal conductivity and mechanical strength.

Milled Fiber

Widely used to improve electric and thermal conductivity in thermoplastic and thermosetting matrices.

Fabric

Various bi-directional and UD cloths are available. All continuous fiber grade can be woven.

Prepreg

We offer various resin systems in uni-directional carbon-fiber-woven cloth impregnated forms.

Carbon Fiber Composite Roller

CARBOLEADER - High performance Carbon Fiber composite rollers.

Several groups are trying to develop new coal-derived Carbon Fibers

NEW CARBON MATERIALS

Volume 32, Issue 1, Feb 2017

Online

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²Depart
³Institu

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Carbon fibers

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Fuel Processing Technology 104 (2012) 155–159

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect



Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry 34 (2016) 397–404

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect



Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jiec



Preparation of isotropic pitch-based carbon fiber using hyper coal through co-carbonation with ethylene bottom oil

Jianxiao Yang^a, Koji Nakabayashi^b, Jin Miyawaki^{a,b}, Seong-Ho Yoon^{a,b,*}

^a Interdisciplinary Graduate School of Engineering Science, Kyushu University, 6-1 Kasugakoen, Kasuga, Fukuoka, Japan

^b Institute for Materials Chemistry and Engineering Kyushu University, 6-1 Kasugakoen, Kasuga, Fukuoka, Japan

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Keywords:
Hyper coal (HPC)
Ethylene bottom oil

ABSTRACT

A spinnable pitch was developed from the tetrahydrofuran-soluble fractions (THFS) of hyper coal (HPC) and used to prepare carbon fibers. THFS-derived pitch from bituminous coal-derived HPC showed excellent spinnability and the obtained carbon fibers had a tensile strength of over 800 MPa with a diameter of 13 μm following heat treatment at 800 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 5 min. Thus, HPC was shown to be a useful alternative precursor for the preparation of low-cost and general-performance carbon fibers.

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Carbon Fiber Composites are widely used in Aerospace Technologies



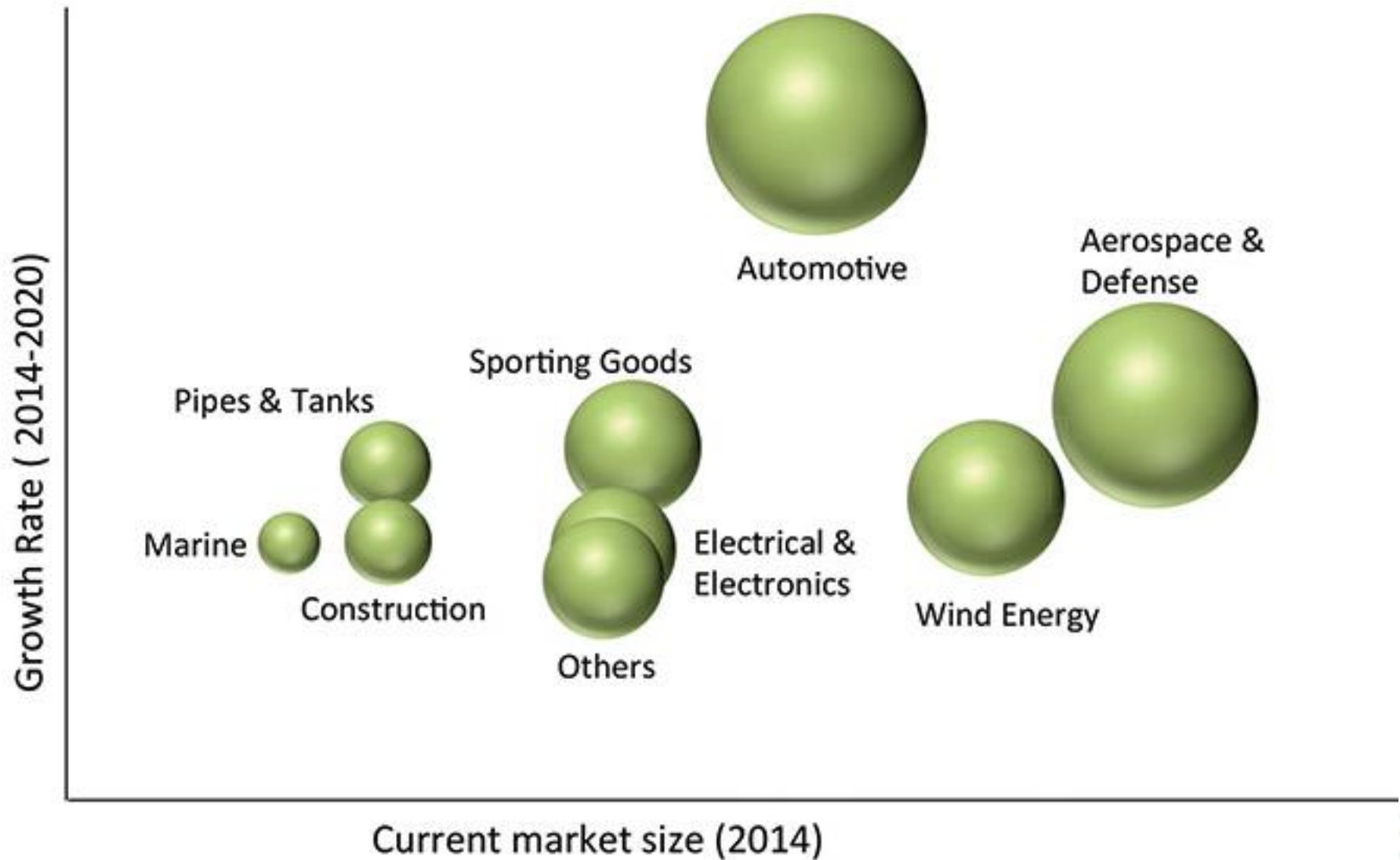
Boeing 787 fuselage



Carbon fiber composites have started to be used in high volume in automobiles: BMW i3: mass-produced carbon fiber cars finally come of age

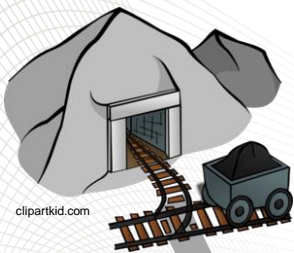


Potential of Carbon Fiber Composites Market Growth

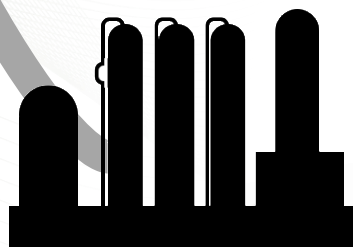


*** Size of the bubble describes market size in 2020**

Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



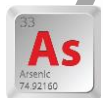
Coal Mine



Coal "Refinery"

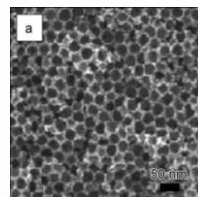


chemicals

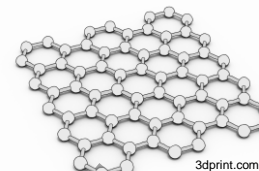


water

activated carbon



mesoporous carbon



graphene

Rare Earth Elements

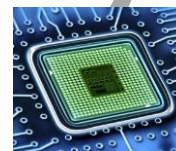
Rare Earth Elements														Y 39
La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71



metallurgical coal



carbon fibers



electronic devices including photovoltaics

Coal can be used to fabricate Photovoltaics

Carbon Emerges as New Solar

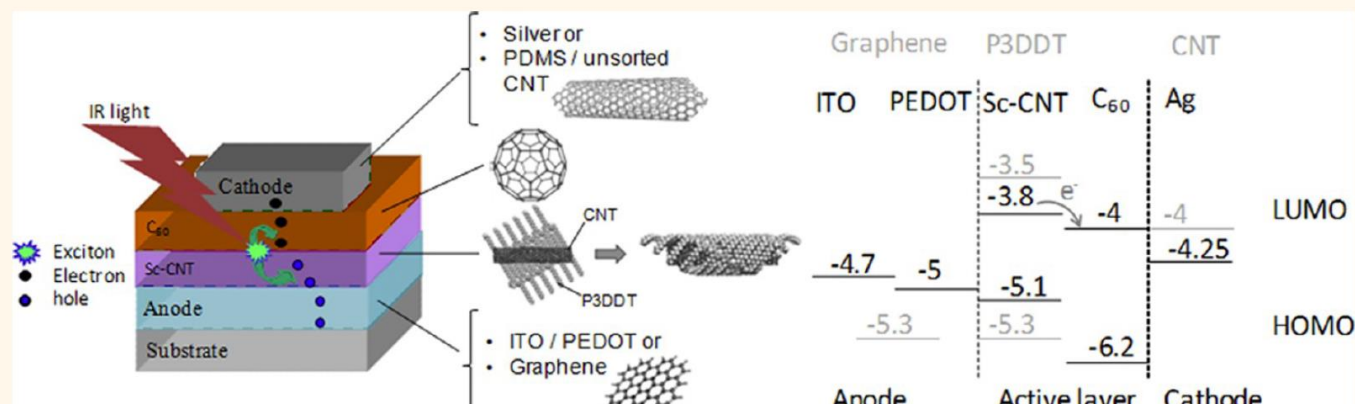
Noncarbon-Based Photovoltaics

Evaluation of Solution-Processable Carbon-Based Electrodes for All-Carbon Solar Cells

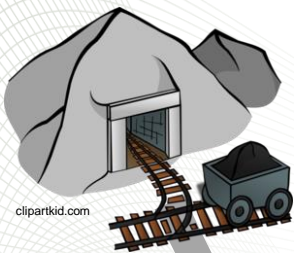
Marc P. Ramuz,^{†,‡} Michael Vosgueritchian,^{†,‡} Peng Wei,[†] Chenggong Wang,[§] Yongli Gao,[§] Yingpeng Wu,[⊥] Yongsheng Chen,[⊥] and Zhenan Bao^{†,*}

[†]Department of Chemical Engineering, Stanford University, 381 North-South Mall, Stanford, California 94305, United States, [§]Department of Physics and Astrophysics, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York 14627, United States, and [⊥]Institute of Polymer Chemistry, Nankai University, Weijin Road 94, Tianjin 300071, China. *These authors contributed equally to this work.

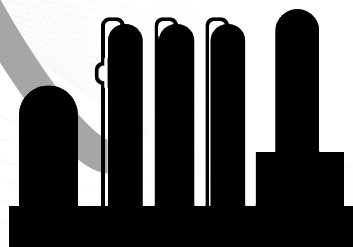
ABSTRACT



Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



Coal Mine



Coal "Refinery"

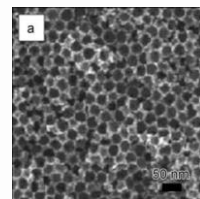


chemicals

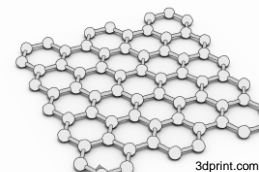


water

activated carbon

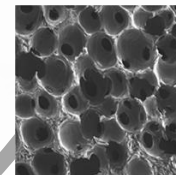


mesoporous carbon



graphene

thermal management



thermal conduction



thermal insulation

Rare Earth Elements														Y	
La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu	39
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	

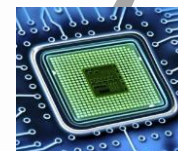
metallurgical coal



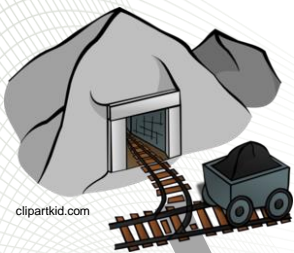
carbon fibers



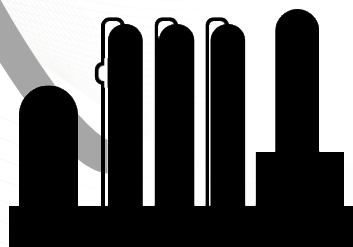
electronic devices including photovoltaics



Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



Coal Mine



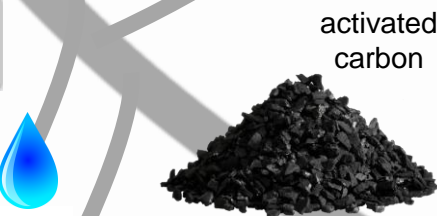
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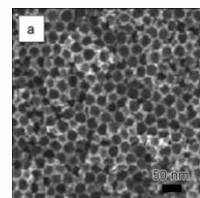
chemicals



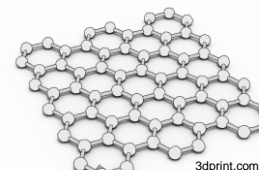
water



activated carbon

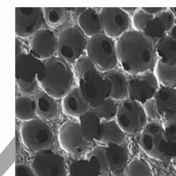


mesoporous carbon



graphene

thermal management



thermal conduction



thermal insulation

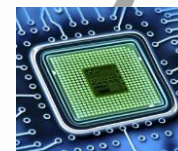
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metallurgical coal



carbon fibers



electronic devices including photovoltaics



Electrodes for Li-ion batteries and supercapacitors



Carbon is used for anodes of most Li-ion batteries

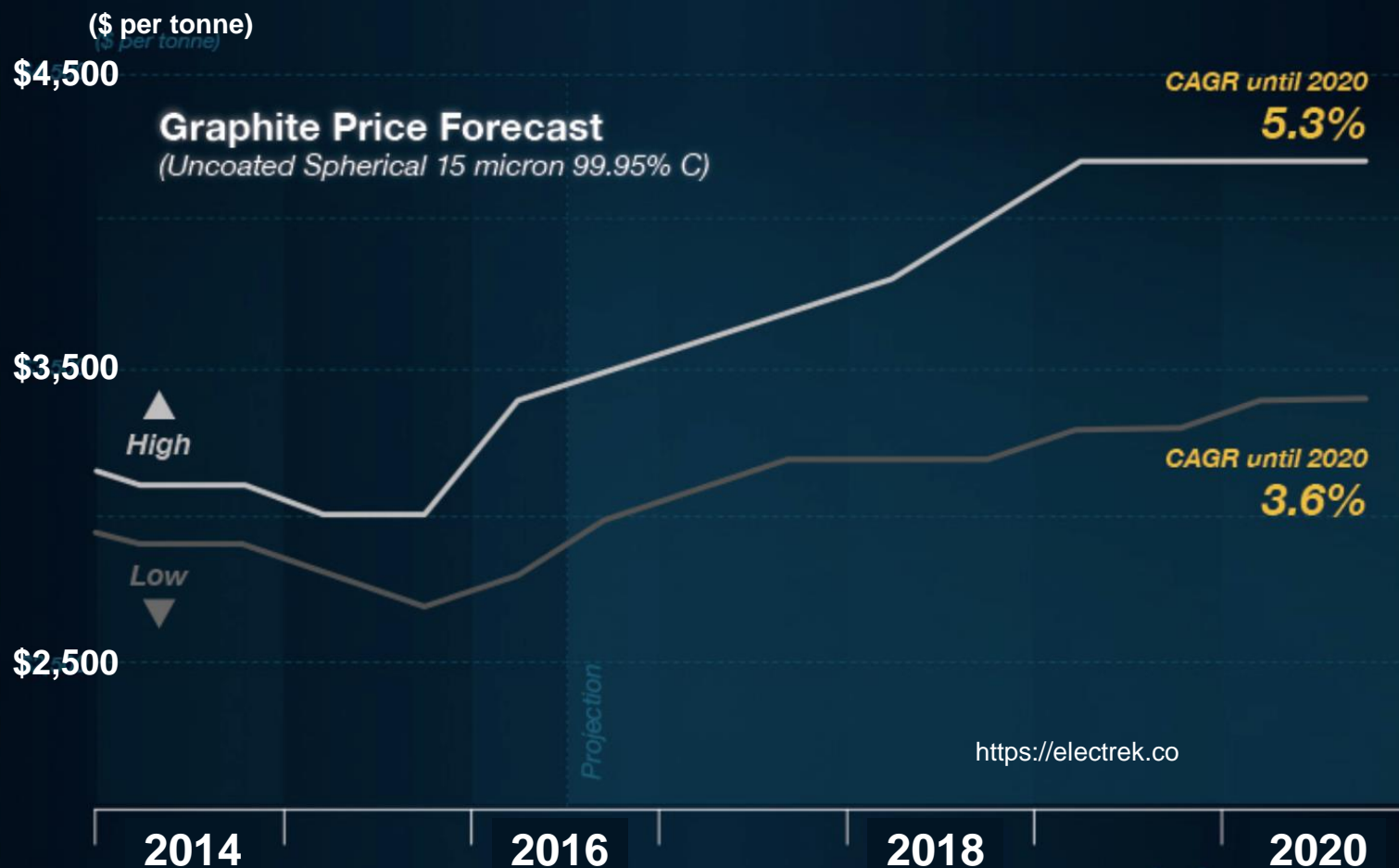
Andrew Miller
Benchmark Minerals



GRAPHITE

There is 54kg of graphite in the battery anode of each Tesla Model S (85kWh)

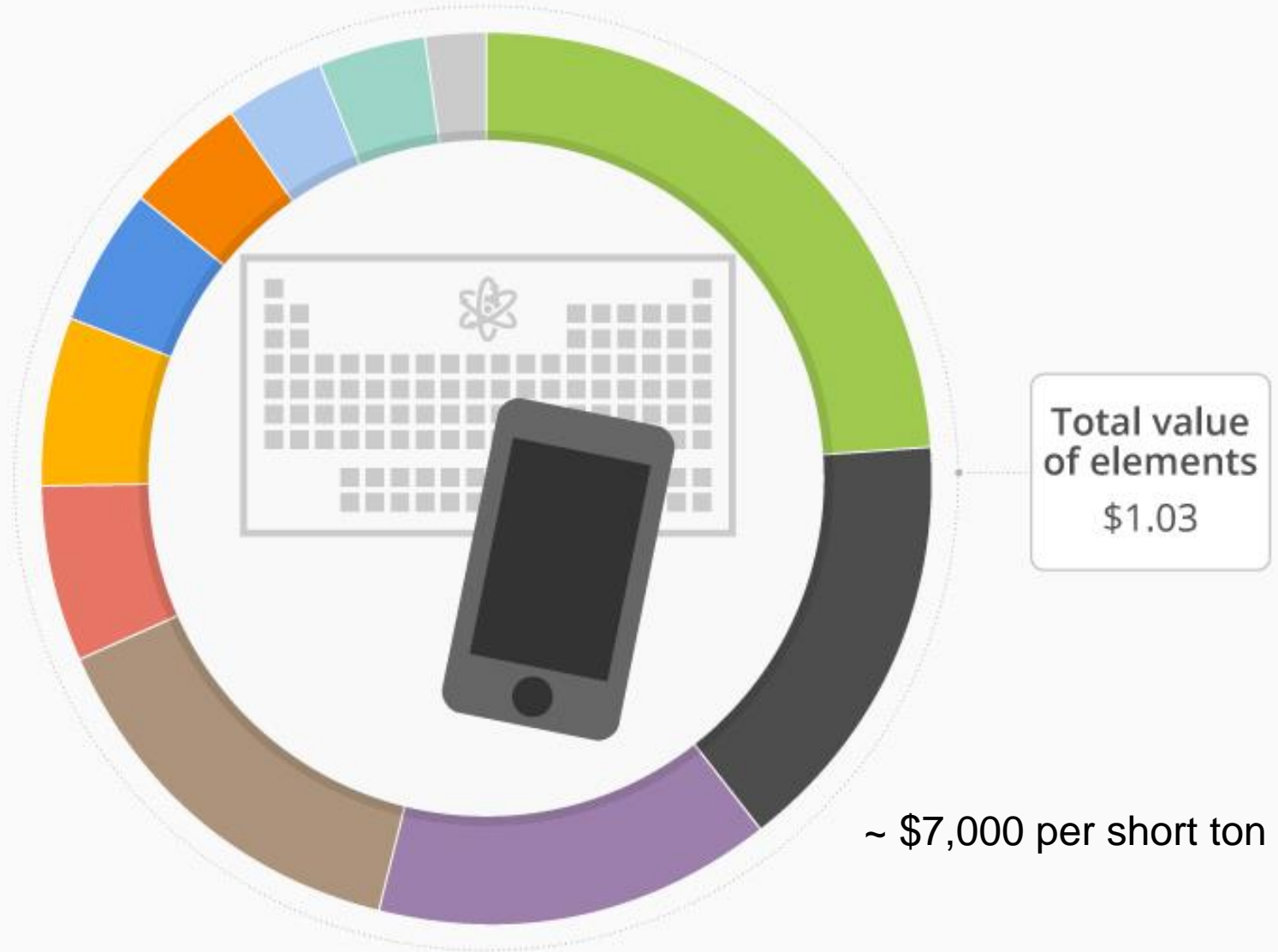
Benchmark Mineral Intelligence forecasts that the battery anode market for graphite (natural and synthetic) will at least **triple in size** from 80,000 tonnes in 2015 to at least 250,000 tonnes by the end of 2020. Rising demand will also influence price:



129 Grams: The Materials That Make Up The iPhone

Materials used in iPhone 6, 16GB model

- 31.1 g Aluminium
- 19.9 g Carbon
- 18.7 g Oxygen
- 18.6 g Iron
- 8.1 g Silicon
- 7.8 g Copper
- 6.6 g Cobalt
- 5.5 g Hydrogen
- 4.9 g Chrome
- 4.9 g Others
- 2.7 g Nickel
- 129.0 g Total

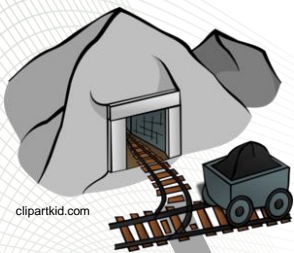


@StatistaCharts

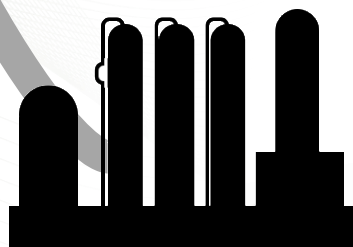
Source: 911 Metallurgist

statista

Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products



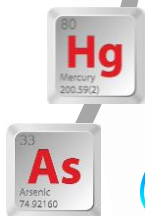
Coal Mine



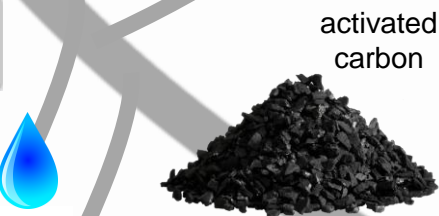
Coal "Refinery"



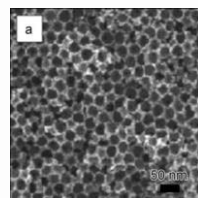
chemicals



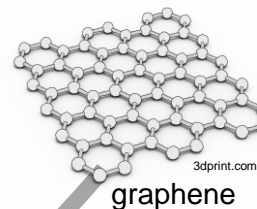
water



activated carbon

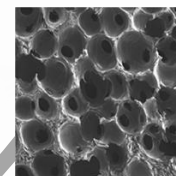


mesoporous carbon



graphene

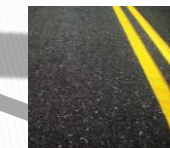
thermal management



thermal conduction



thermal insulation



building and construction materials

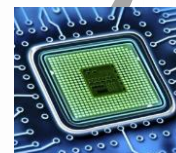
Rare Earth Elements														Y	
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metallurgical coal



carbon fibers



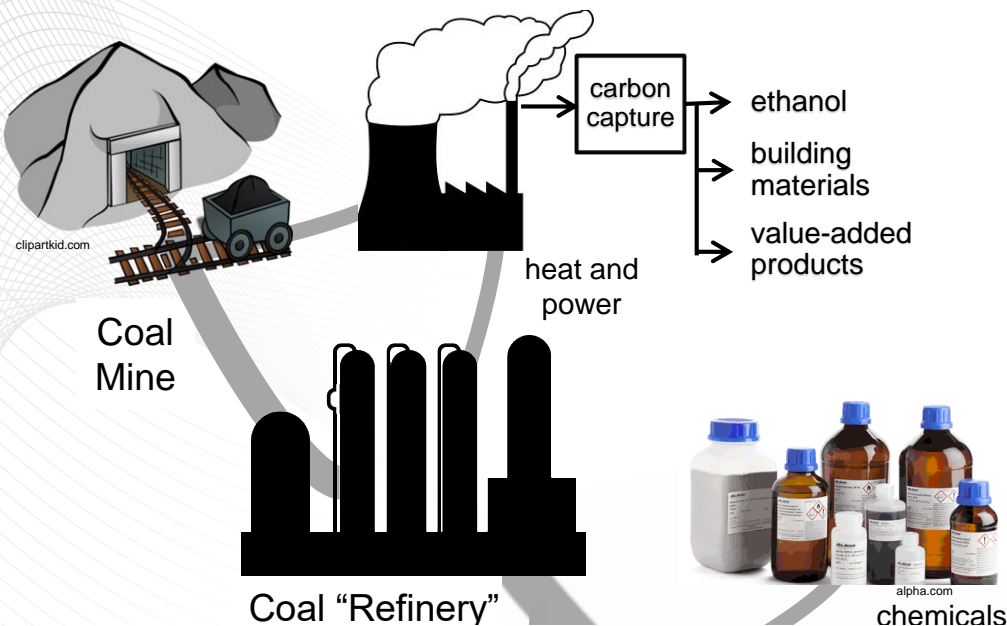
electronic devices including photovoltaics



Electrodes for Li-ion batteries and supercapacitors

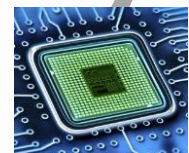


Coal as a Precursor for High Value-Added Products

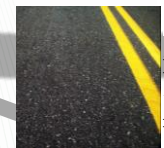


Finding use for every molecule that is mined.
No molecule left behind!

La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	Sm	Eu	Gd	Tb	Dy	Ho	Er	Tm	Yb	Lu
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71



thermal insulation



Edgar's Letter



Edgar Lara-Curzio
Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

D. J. Trump
President of the United States,
White House
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

The National Laboratories are ready to collaborate with the Coal Industry and Academia to develop the underlying and translational science that will enable the development and deployment of energy-efficient and cost-effective processes for: recovering rare-earth elements from coal and converting coal into high value-added products thus enabling the creation of new manufacturing industries and well-paying jobs in coal communities across the U.S

DOE's Fossil Energy Program sponsors workshop



HOME

REGISTER

LOCATION

AGENDA

CONTACTS

COAL-TO-PRODUCTS

A Workshop to Identify Research Needs to Enable the Use of Coal as a Precursor for Value-Added Products



WHEN

April 5-6, 2018



WHERE

Pittsburgh, PA
Pittsburgh Airport Marriott Hotel

Workshop Report in Preparation

DOE's Fossil Energy Program sponsors Technoeconomic Analysis

STATEMENT OF WORK

Techno-Economic Analysis of the U.S. Value-Added Coal Product Industry

April 2018

**Prepared by
Sujit Das
Senior R&D Staff Member
Energy & Transportation Science Division
Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL)
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831**

ORNL is collaborating with Ramaco, WRI, MIT and the University of Wyoming to turn coal into high value-added products

‘Too Valuable to Burn’: Ramaco to Turn Coal from Wyo. Mine into Car, Plane Parts

February 24, 2017

SNL, Taylor Kuykendall, 2/23/2017

Ramaco Carbon LLC is aiming to “fundamentally diversify the future of the coal industry” with a “coal to cars” mine, research center and industrial park.

The facility is a partnership of the Ramaco Resources Inc. affiliate as well as national research teams from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Grossman Group for Advanced Materials, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Duke University, Southern Research Institute and the Western Research Institute. The group is aiming to divert “a significant amount of thermal coal production” away from coal-burning utilities and into the creation of other products using coal as a base.

The group plans to start with carbon fiber parts for cars, airplanes and other products. Ramaco Carbon said the company expects that its Powder River Basin coal reserves and operations will now separately serve as the nucleus of a “coal to products” technology company with a focus on manufacturing high-value industrial products.

Social & Economic Perspective

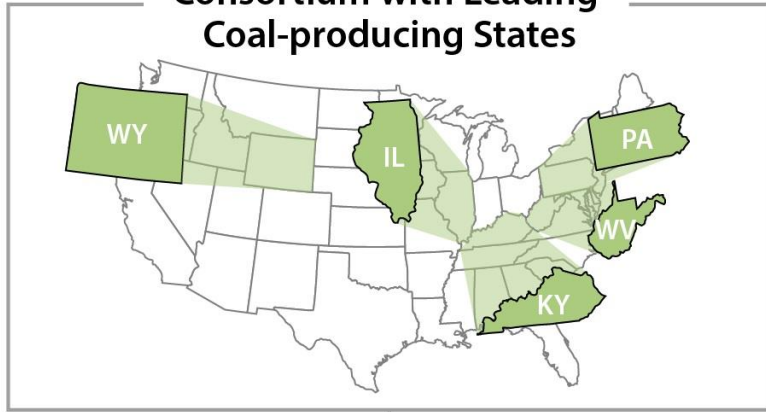
The Sweat of their Face:
Portraying American
Workers,”

National Portrait Gallery



“Mine America’s Coal”
Norman Rockwell

Consortium with Leading Coal-producing States

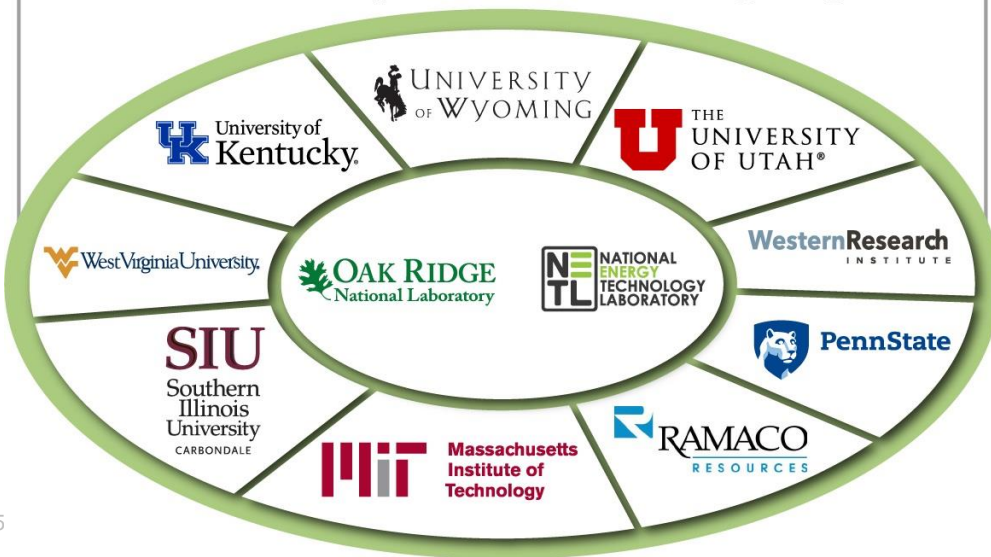


State Economic Development Programs



Community Colleges

Workforce Development and Re-training Programs



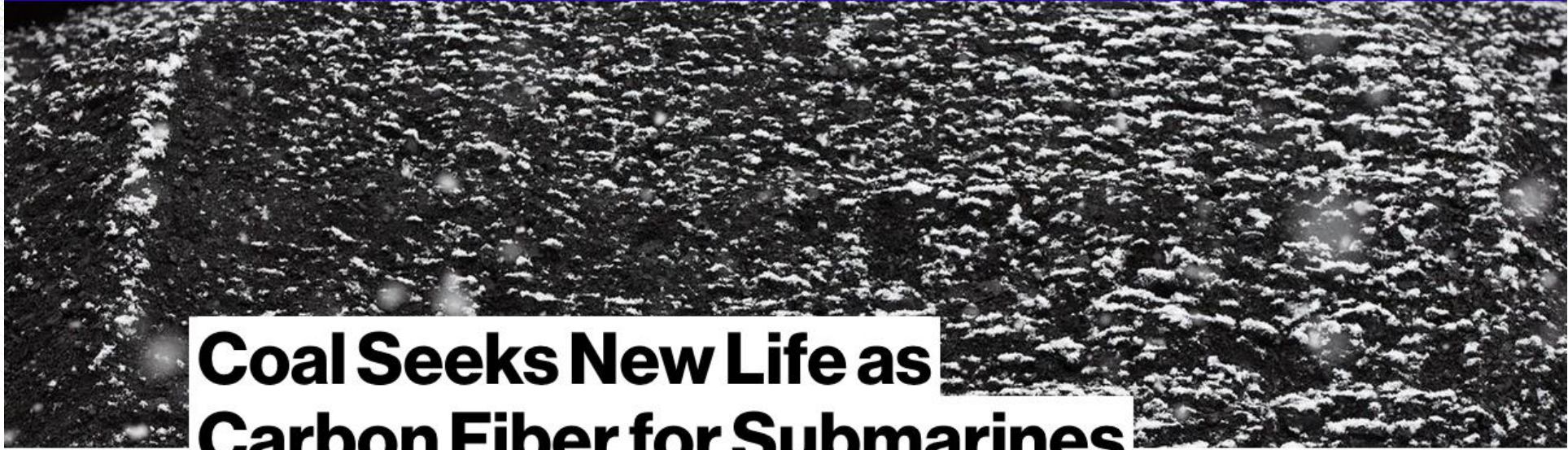
Bringing Manufacturing Jobs to Coal Communities

Opportunities for retraining and work force development

In analogy to the Critical Materials Institute, could we establish a public-private partnership to develop the underlying science that will enable the development of energy-efficient and cost-effective separation processes to obtain from coal, precursors for manufacturing high value-added products?

Questions?

Additional Slides



Coal Seeks New Life as Carbon Fiber for Submarines

By **Tim Loh** and **Patrick Martin**

September 13, 2017, 7:00 PM EDT *Updated on* September 14, 2017, 9:53 AM EDT

From **Climate Changed**

- One of many uses scientists study as U.S. utilities burn less
- New markets won't restore lost mine jobs, but may halt slide

The 30-foot hull of an experimental mini-sub is helping to show how the U.S. may be able to redeploy the mountain of coal that power plants are no longer burning.

Researchers at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee used carbon fibers to build the submersible for the U.S. Navy with a [3-D printer](#), demonstrating the promise of new manufacturing techniques that are faster, cheaper and more flexible. But it also offers inspiration to scientists looking to turn America's vast reserves of coal into advanced materials, including carbon fibers now made using petroleum-based polymers.

Most Read

- 1 A \$150 Billion Misfire: How Disaster Models Got Irma Wrong
- 2 NFL TV Ratings Slump Again
- 3 Jamie Dimon Slams Bitcoin as a 'Fraud'
- 4 Pandit Says 30% of Bank Jobs May Disappear in Next Five Years
- 5 Apple Unveils iPhone X With New Display as Rivals Grow

ORNL innovations have had billion dollar impacts



Lab-on-a-chip: Caliper sold for \$600M in 2011

Cesium extraction: Basis for \$1.3B waste processing facility at Savannah River

Reactor life extension: \$20B cost avoidance

Advanced alloys: Chrome-moly steel in widespread use

Cryopreservation of mouse embryos: Frozen embryo transfer for livestock reproduction

Ion implantation: Technology for integrated circuits and medical implants

Centrifuge technology: Basis for vaccine purification and US enrichment industry

Instrumentation: >\$1B in products and spinoffs from ORTEC and TENNELEC

Reactor technology: Concept and technology development for light water, high temperature, and molten salt reactors

PUREX: Basis for nuclear fuel reprocessing techniques used worldwide

Radioisotopes: Multibillion dollar industry (>100 million procedures per year)



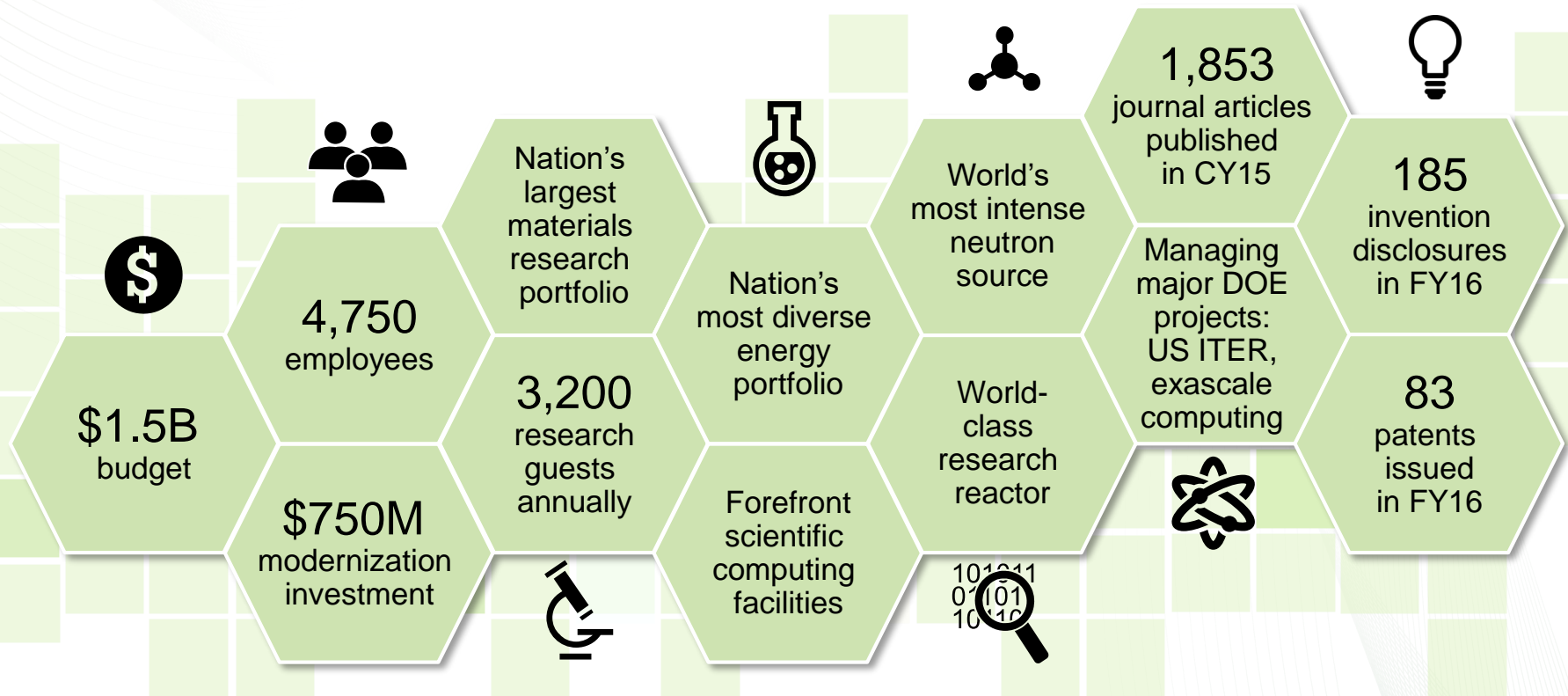
1940s

1960s

1980s

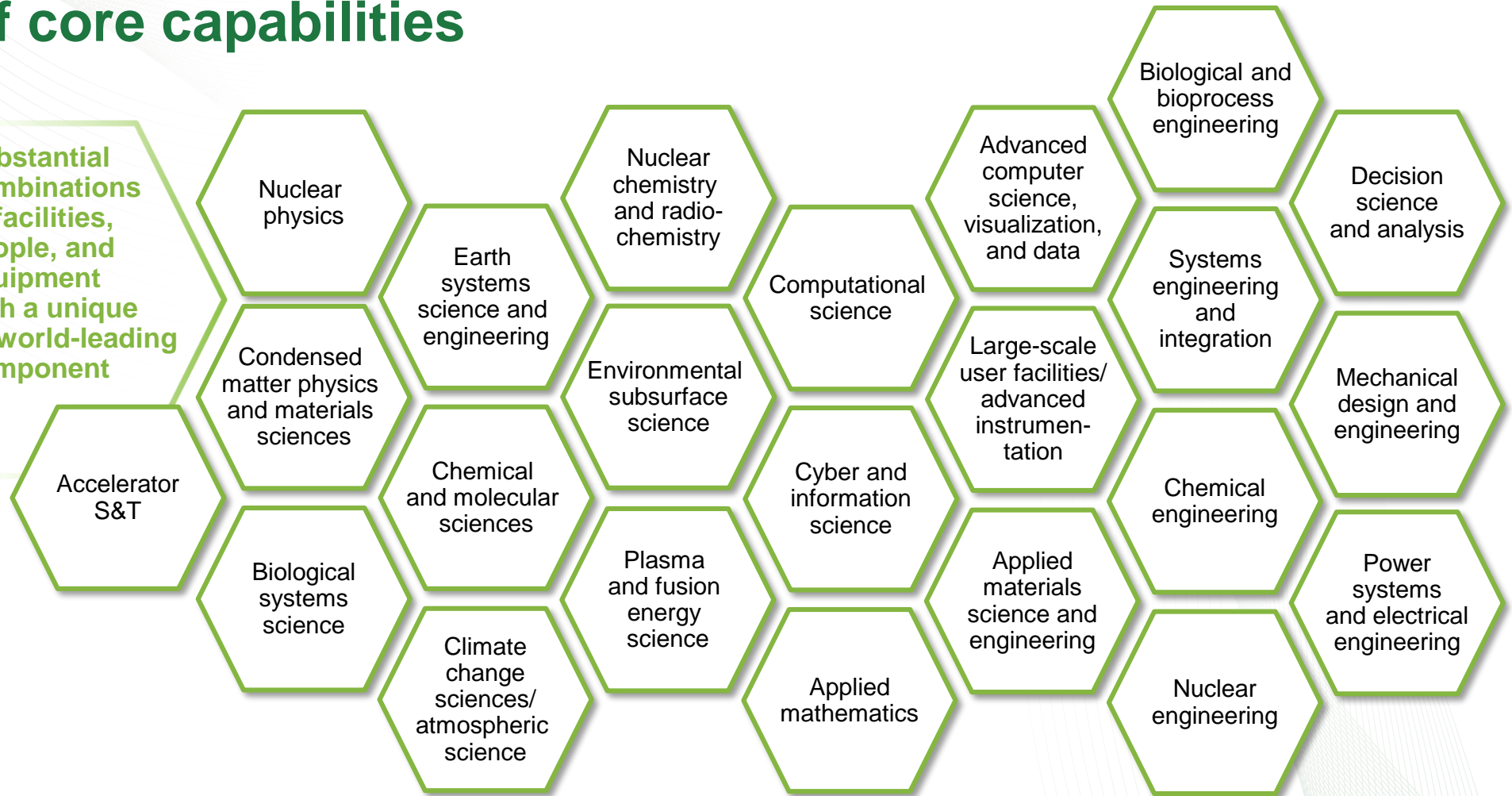
2000s

Today, ORNL is a leading science and energy laboratory

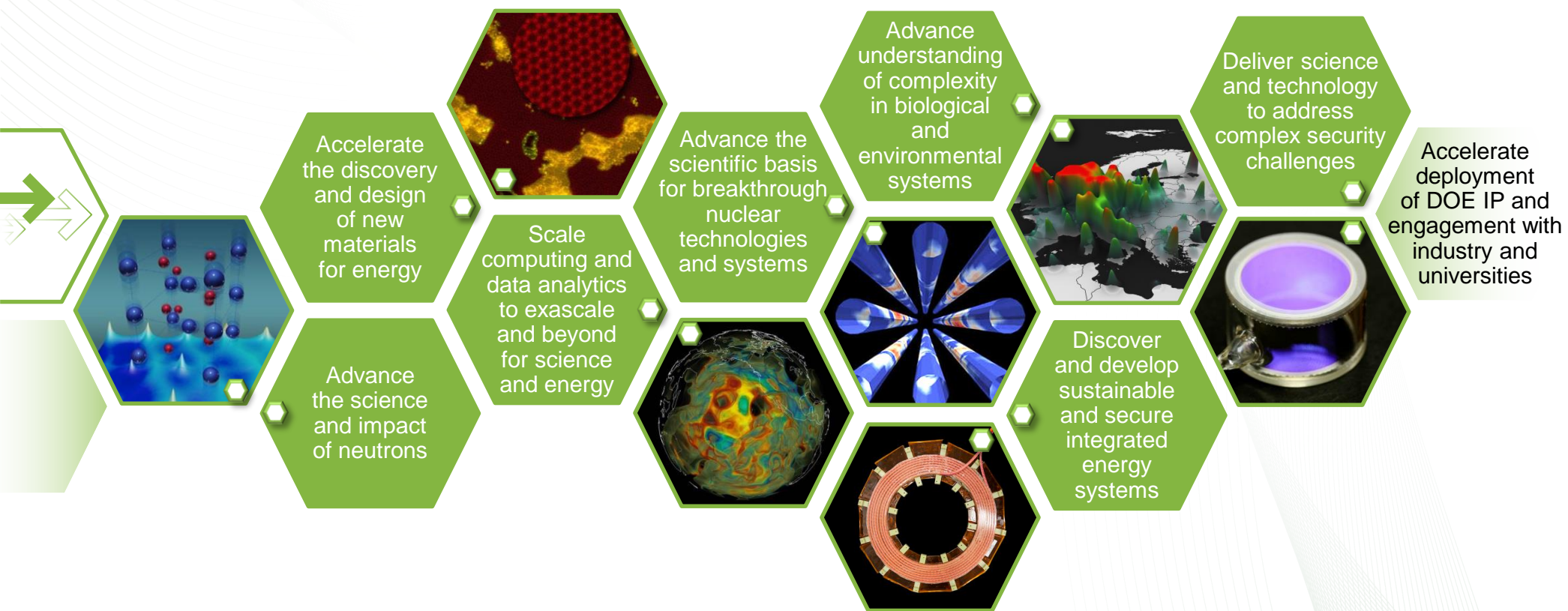


ORNL has an exceptionally broad set of core capabilities

Substantial combinations of facilities, people, and equipment with a unique or world-leading component



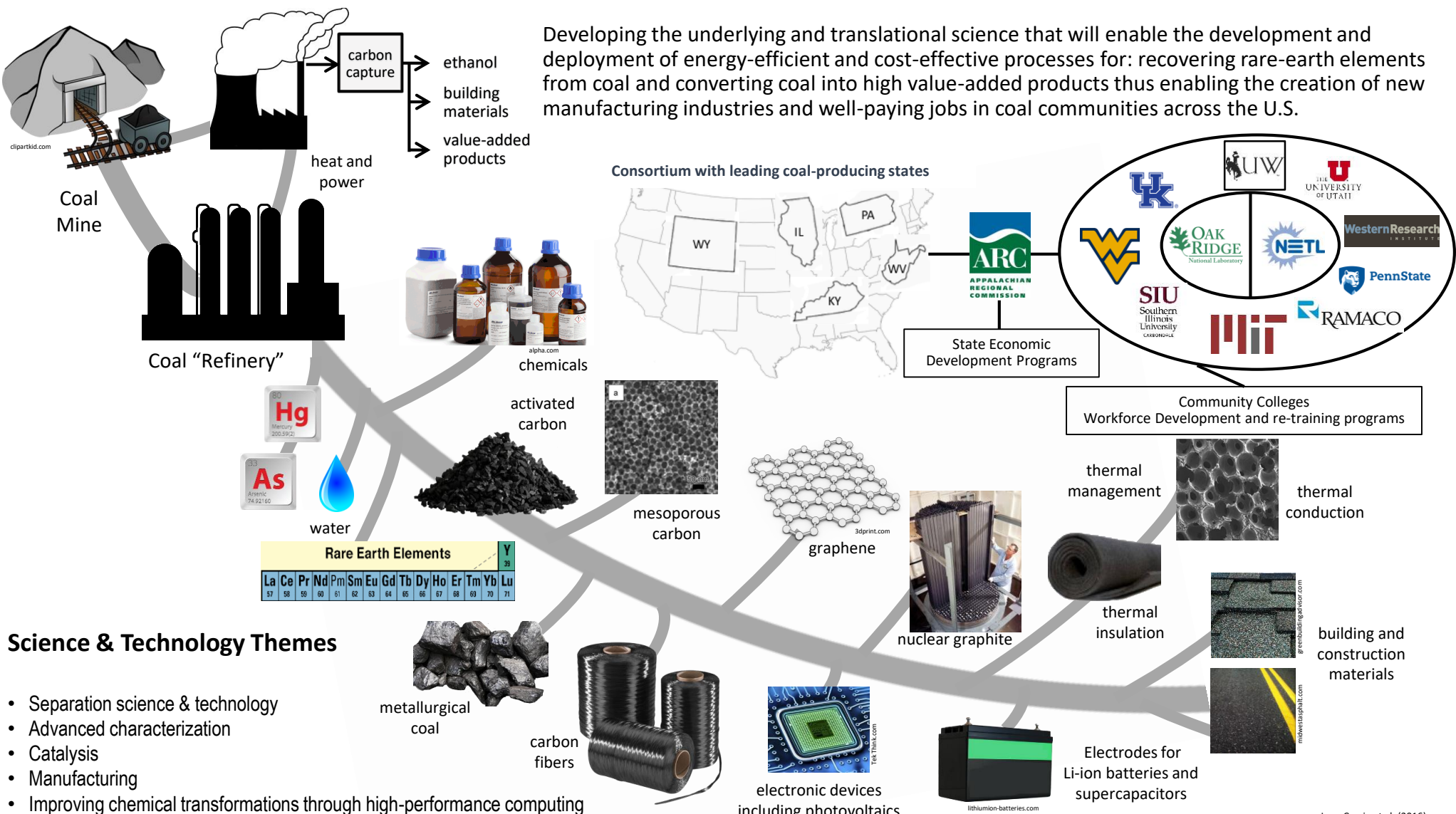
Our core capabilities position us to tackle compelling problems in science and technology



Converting Coal into High Value-Added Products

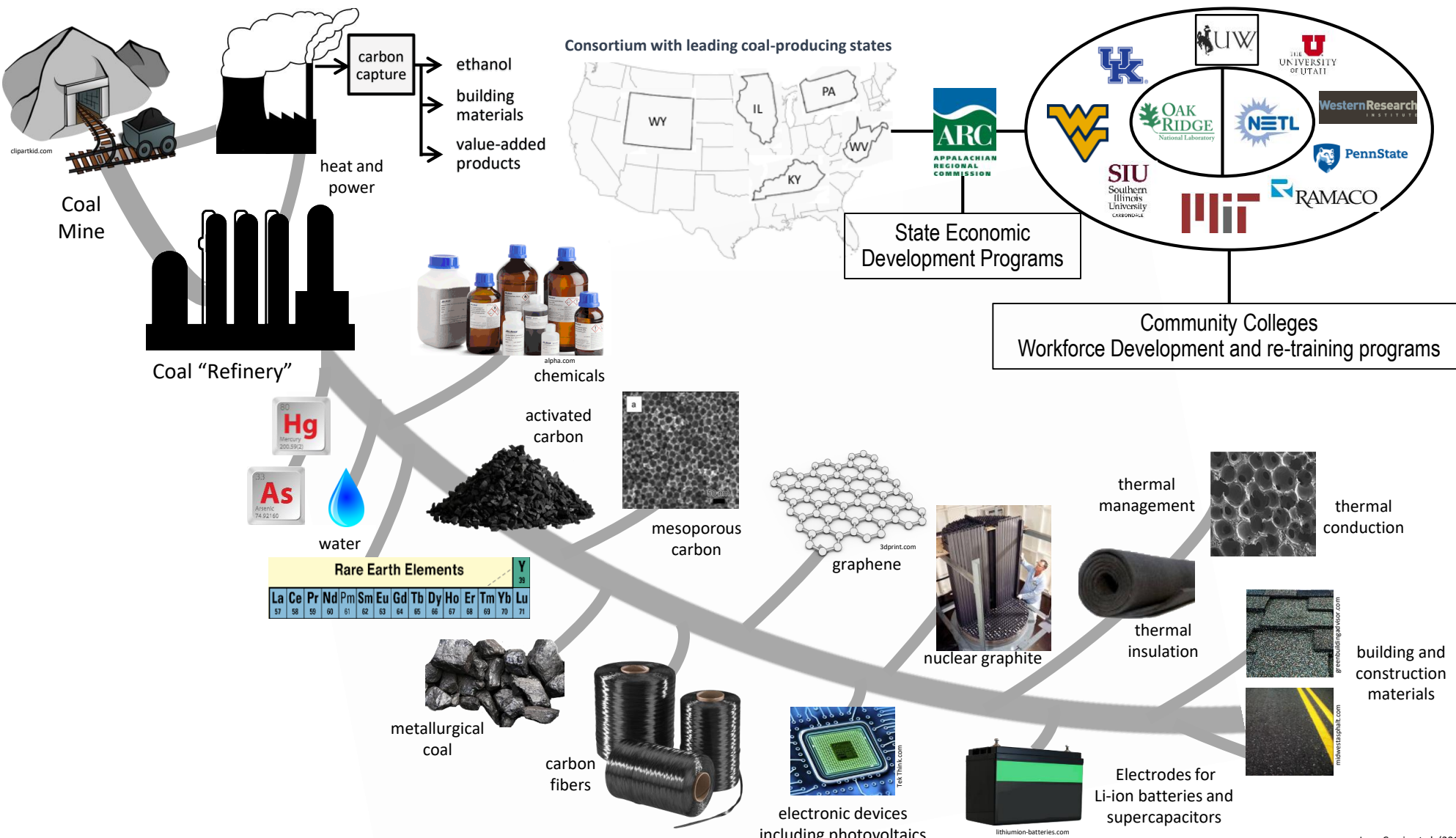
Finding use for every molecule that is mined. No molecule left behind!

Developing the underlying and translational science that will enable the development and deployment of energy-efficient and cost-effective processes for: recovering rare-earth elements from coal and converting coal into high value-added products thus enabling the creation of new manufacturing industries and well-paying jobs in coal communities across the U.S.



Science & Technology Themes

- Separation science & technology
- Advanced characterization
- Catalysis
- Manufacturing
- Improving chemical transformations through high-performance computing
- Materials and infrastructure, including modular chemical reactor designs
- Energy, Economic and Life-Cycle Analysis, including integration of products (precursors and chemicals) into the existing supply infrastructure



Lara-Curzio et al. (2016)