

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Context:  
history and drivers  
of economic  
development #1



**National development of railroads in the 1800s opened access to large parts of the mineral-rich west:**  
→ The ability to move commodities to market efficiently, coupled with access to federal lands was transformative for mineral development.

**Historically stable tax and mining laws for more than a century:**  
→ The Mining Act of 1872 opened up access to the extensive federal lands in the west, and remains in force.

**Periodic major development efforts,** such as The New Deal, post WWII stockpiling and labour reentry, as well as market liberalisations in the 1980s led to substantial changes in the economy and raw material demand.

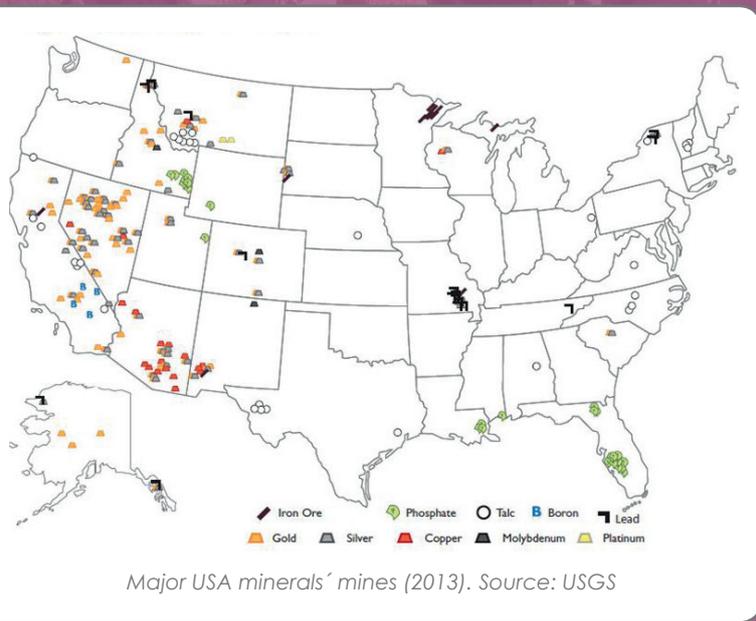
**There was historically strong research in mining and minerals through universities, the USGS, and US Bureau of Mines until the 1980s:**  
→ Early mining technology and mineral exploration techniques were advanced by U.S. research for decades.



**There are large tracts of sparsely populated public lands available for development:**  
→ During the mid- to late-1800s, as industrialisation expanded, large tracts, particularly in western states, were readily available for development, especially by small-scale miners, some of whom were moving west after the Civil War.

**Historically stable rule of law and enforcement of property rights:**  
→ Since the mid-1800s, national and state laws and their enforcement have been relatively stable.

**NAFTA and other free-trade arrangements have led to realignment of specific commodity import/export trends:**  
→ A 20-year trend towards free trade shifted which commodities were imported and produced, as well as the flow of material through the material lifecycle to include export and reimport.



**The U.S. has substantial natural resource endowment which enabled production of a large range of minerals:**  
→ The United States has a wide range of mineral and energy resources, many of which became accessible during the peak of industrialisation.



**Ample coal supplies fuelled rapid industrialisation:**  
→ Extensive coal resources and early oil and gas production made industrialisation particularly efficient for the U.S.

