

# Why antimony can store energy

Why is antimony a good material?

While antimony's cosmetic status has waned over the past five millennia, the metalloid's ability to resist heat and corrosion, make stronger lead alloys, produce clearer glass for high-tech devices, and store renewable energy has created new uses for the ancient metal.

Is antimony a contested resource?

As the clean energy transition accelerates, critical minerals such as cobalt, lithium, and rare earth elements have become buzzwords in business, international relations, and sustainability. Yet amid the scramble for these well-known resources, another metal - antimony - has quietly emerged as another keenly contested resource.

Is antimony a mineral?

Antimony is not a mineral, it is an element. The most common mineral containing antimony is stibnite. Despite its lack of fanfare, antimony is a critical mineral that plays an important role in the mass storage of renewable energy.

Why is antimony important to US National Security?

In the past, China has imposed restrictions on the exports of antimony-based products to the U.S., which reduced availability and increased prices. Because of this, antimony was identified as one of the 35 minerals that are critical to U.S. national security.

Where is antimony used today?

“Today, antimony is used in lead-acid storage batteries for backup power and transportation; in chemicals, ceramics, and glass; in flame-retardant materials; and in heat stabilizers and plastics,” according to the USGS.

What is antimony and why is it deemed critical?

Antimony (Sb), a silvery metalloid,<sup>1</sup> is isolated and processed from the mineral stibnite ( $\text{Sb}_2\text{S}_3$ ) for commercial use in a variety of downstream products and industries; its key properties are its ability to harden and strengthen certain metals.

Capacitors used for energy storage. Capacitors are devices which store electrical energy in the form of electrical charge accumulated on their plates. When a capacitor is connected to a power source, it accumulates energy which can be released when the capacitor is disconnected from the charging source, and in this respect they are similar to batteries.

You can use the energy to spin up a flywheel and then later extract the energy by using the flywheel to run a generator. 7. Heat. You can store heat directly and later convert the heat to another form of energy like electricity. 8. Compressed Air. You can use compressed air to store energy. Toys like the Air Hog store energy

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in this way ...

**Factors Influencing Capacitor Energy Storage.** Several factors influence how much energy a capacitor can store. Capacitance: The higher the capacitance, the more energy a capacitor can store. Capacitance depends on the surface area of the conductive plates, the distance between the plates, and the properties of the dielectric material.

A supply shortage has triggered the steepest rally in price "ever recorded" in the global antimony market since April, according to FastMarkets who began recording prices from January 1980. In May, prices reached US\$17,588.88 per metric ton of antimony ingot, up 54% in 2024, according to the Shanghai Metals Exchange; prices in Europe reached US\$22,700 a ton ...

**Alloys:** Antimony is used to harden and strengthen other metals is commonly alloyed with lead to improve the hardness and strength of products like batteries, bullets, and cable sheathing. **Flame Retardants:** Antimony trioxide ( $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_3$ ) is a crucial component in flame-retardant formulations for textiles, plastics, and electronics, helping prevent the spread of fires.

The heat pump can then be switched to recover the energy, taking it from the hot store and placing it in the cold store. This produces mechanical work, which is used to power a generator. One of the benefits of this system is that it reacts considerably faster than other storage systems, taking action within minutes.

Prolonged exposure to relatively high antimony concentrations (9 mg/m<sup>3</sup> of air) can irritate the eyes, skin, and lungs. As the exposure continues, more serious health impacts may arise, such as lung diseases, heart issues, diarrhea, severe vomiting, and stomach ulcers. It is unclear whether antimony can induce cancer or reproductive failure.

The Energy Act of 2020 defines a "critical material" as: Any non-fuel mineral, element, substance, or material that the Secretary of Energy determines: (i) has a high risk of supply chain disruption; and (ii) serves an essential function in one or more energy technologies, including technologies that produce, transmit, store, and conserve energy; or

These systems can store large amounts of energy and release it rapidly. SMES is known for its high efficiency and quick response times, making it suitable for applications where rapid and reliable energy discharge is essential. Finally, let's quickly address the commonly asked questions on how to store solar energy.

MIT engineers have created a "supercapacitor" made of ancient, abundant materials, that can store large amounts of energy. Made of just cement, water, and carbon black (which resembles powdered charcoal), the device could form the basis for inexpensive systems that store intermittently renewable energy, such as solar or wind energy.

The ability to store clean energy safely could lead to the decommissioning of environmentally harmful and

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costly energy storage systems. Ambri's batteries are made of calcium and the metal antimony, safe materials that won't cause fires and are cheaper than in-demand minerals like lithium, said Bradwell.

Molten antimony battery. While lead-acid battery usage is expected to decline as electric motors take the place of ICE engines in the vehicles traveling global highways, antimony is finding its way into new applications in next-generation batteries that can efficiently store electricity at the grid scale.

The most commonly mined ore is called stibnite, which contains antimony and sulphur. Antimony can also be a byproduct of gold mining, or recovered from recycling lead-acid batteries. WHAT ARE CHINA'S RESTRICTIONS? China's new limits apply to antimony products including ore, ingots and oxide.

Specifically, antimony can store up to 660 mAh/g when used in lithium-ion batteries, far surpassing many other conventional materials. This capacity makes it worthy of exploration as an alternative anode material, providing energy density and longevity crucial for ...

(Reuters) - China will impose export controls on some antimony products from Sept. 15, it said on Thursday, citing national security, adding to measures imposed by Beijing since last year to curb shipments of strategic minerals. Following are details on Chinese restrictions and the antimony market. WHAT IS ANTIMONY AND WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

in clean energy through technologies like solar panels, wind and hydro turbines, and semi-conductors. Antimony also has a variety of uses in battery technology--from the batteries in hybrid and electric cars, to cutting edge solid-state batteries that capture and convert waste heat into electricity, to liquid batteries that will store large-

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