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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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5/27/2014

Alexandria, Va. — The existence of seafloor sediments containing valuable minerals and metals has been known since the late 19th century, but it wasn't until the 1960s that the earliest attempts to recover mineral wealth from the deep sea were made. Technical challenges, as well as discoveries in the 1970s of more economical and previously unknown terrestrial mineral deposits, shelved the idea until the 1990s. Today, the surging demand for rare minerals, driven largely by their use in modern electronics, along with technological advancements and the discovery of mineral-rich seafloor massive sulfides, has now made the high cost of extraction worthwhile.

Today, the ability to tap seafloor mineral wealth by mining the deep sea is close to fruition, and mining companies and experts agree it's not a matter of if deep-sea mining will begin, but when.

Read more about the technological, political, environmental and scientific challenges of mining the deep sea in the June issue of EARTH Magazine at <http://bit.ly/1IZVtIs>.

For more stories about the science of our planet, check out EARTH Magazine online or subscribe at www.earthmagazine.org. The June issue, now available on the digital newsstand, features stories on how bedrock in the Sierra Nevada shapes vegetation, the record-breaking speed of soil production on New Zealand slopes, and how ionospheric charges may portend earthquakes, plus much, much more.

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Press Release PDF:



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