

PUMICE AND PUMICITE

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: In 2011, domestic production of pumice and pumicite was estimated to be 380,000 metric tons with an estimated processed value of about \$7.7 million, f.o.b. plant. Production occurred at 14 producers in 7 States. Pumice and pumicite were mined in Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Kansas, in descending order of production. Approximately 46% of all production came from Nevada and Oregon. About 70% of mined pumice was used in the production of construction building block; horticulture consumed 16%; abrasives, 6%; concrete admixture and aggregate, 4%; and the remaining 4% was used for absorbent, filtration, laundry stone washing, and other applications.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011^e</u>
Production, mine ¹	1,270	791	410	390	380
Imports for consumption	37	65	26	35	35
Exports ^e	9	15	11	13	15
Consumption, apparent	1,290	841	425	412	400
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine or mill	22.85	20.13	29.97	20.00	20.30
Employment, mine and mill, number	300	220	150	145	145
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	2	6	4	5	5

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2007–10): Greece, 88%; Mexico, 4%; Iceland, 4%; Montserrat, 2%; and other, 2%.

<u>Tariff: Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Normal Trade Relations</u> <u>12-31-11</u>
Pumice, crude or in irregular pieces, including crushed	2513.10.0010	Free.
Pumice, except crude or crushed	2513.10.0080	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 5% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: The amount of domestically produced pumice and pumicite sold or used in 2011 decreased slightly to 380,000 tons, compared with 390,000 tons in 2010. Exports increased and imports were unchanged compared with those of 2010. Approximately 96% of pumice imports originated from Greece, Iceland, and Mexico in 2011, and primarily supplied markets in the eastern and gulf coast regions of the United States.

Although pumice and pumicite are plentiful in the Western United States, legal challenges and public land designations could limit access to known deposits. Pumice and pumicite production is sensitive to mining and transportation costs. An increase in fuel prices would likely lead to increases in production expenditures; imports and competing materials could become more attractive than domestic products.

All known domestic pumice and pumicite mining in 2011 was accomplished through open pit methods, generally in remote areas where land-use conflicts were not severe. Although the generation and disposal of reject fines in mining and milling resulted in local dust issues at some operations, the environmental impact was restricted to a relatively small geographic area.

World Mine Production and Reserves:

	Mine production		Reserves³
	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011^e</u>	
United States ¹	390	380	Large in the United States. Quantitative estimates of reserves for most countries are not available.
Algeria	450	450	
Cameroon	600	600	
Chile	915	950	
Ecuador	680	680	
Greece	1,280	1,300	
Guatemala	400	400	
Iran	1,500	1,500	
Italy	3,020	3,000	
New Zealand	160	160	
Saudi Arabia	800	800	
Spain	600	600	
Syria	950	900	
Turkey	4,000	4,100	
Other countries	<u>1,570</u>	<u>1,320</u>	
World total (rounded)	17,300	17,000	

World Resources: The identified U.S. resources of pumice and pumicite are concentrated in the Western States and estimated to be more than 25 million tons. The estimated total resources (identified and undiscovered) in the Western and Great Plains States are at least 250 million tons and may total more than 1 billion tons. Turkey and Italy are the leading producers of pumice and pumicite, followed by Iran, Greece, Syria, and Chile. There are large resources of pumice and pumicite on all continents.

Substitutes: The costs of transportation determine the maximum economic distance pumice and pumicite can be shipped and still remain competitive with alternative materials. Competitive resources that may be substituted for pumice and pumicite include crushed aggregates, diatomite, expanded shale and clay, and vermiculite.

^eEstimated.

¹Quantity sold and used by producers.

²Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

³[See Appendix C for resource/reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.](#)