



February 23, 2023

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Madam Secretary,

I write in support of our increasingly important domestic copper industry. Copper has been and will continue to be critical to our national security, our water infrastructure and our overall electrical grid infrastructure. I strongly urge that your Department officially include copper on the latest U.S. Geological Survey list of “critical minerals” without delay.

This designation will significantly benefit and protect the United States and Wyoming as we continue to substantially invest in a variety of copper intensive applications. By recognizing copper as a “critical mineral,” the United States’ federal government can more effectively ensure a secure and reliable supply of domestic copper resources in the years to come.

The copper industry is a major contributor to U.S. economic and national security and is essential to nearly every facet of the U.S. economy, including construction, consumer products and the energy sector. Companies manufacturing copper and copper alloys and the copper miners, refineries, and other members of the industry directly create approximately 40,000 jobs in 30 U.S. states. This workforce significantly supports local and regional economies through the creation of additional downstream employment opportunities for plumbers, electricians, automotive workers and electronics manufacturers to name just a few. Also, for U.S. national security purposes, copper is the **second-most** widely used metal by weight in U.S. defense systems.

The risks to copper from imports (particularly from adversarial countries) have increased dramatically. The share of copper consumption that is met by net imports has increased from 31% in 2016 to a staggering 49.3% in 2021. In the first half of 2022, the net import reliance stood at 48%. In addition, Russia, China, Iran and North Korea now account for half of all non-U.S. global refined copper production.

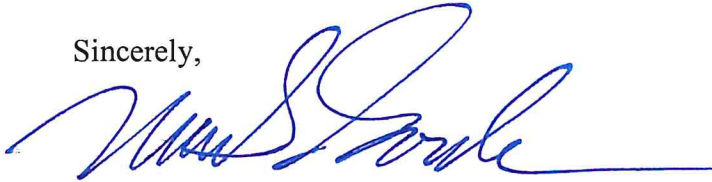
As more consumers look to electric vehicles, copper and copper alloys will continue to be vital to this industry. Copper is integral to electric vehicles, electric vehicle charging stations, renewable energy applications (solar & wind), data processing centers, and electrical grid-level upgrades. Renewable energy has a higher intensity of copper use than traditional power generation, and electric vehicles consume 3-4 times the copper of an internal combustion engine

powered vehicle. The International Energy Agency (IEA) noted this year that copper demand for grid lines alone will more than double by 2040.

Given copper's role in Wyoming's and national economic development, national security, and infrastructure, I again encourage that copper be included in the USGS list of "critical minerals".

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Mark Gordon  
Governor

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