



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Dear Joe,

Now that we are a few weeks into President Biden’s first 100 days – with an intense focus on COVID relief aid for individuals, families and small businesses – we must not lose sight of the role mining can play in our economic recovery. Whether the U.S. wants to lead in advanced energy manufacturing and invest in infrastructure modernization, create U.S. jobs and grow the overall economy, U.S. manufacturing growth, future technologies and infrastructure projects rely on raw materials sourced from mines.

In fact, as the CEO of a lithium producer recently said, demand is about to go “vertical.” And it’s not just lithium: The World Bank estimates that the production of minerals, such as graphite, nickel and cobalt, could increase by 500 percent by 2050 to meet the growing demand for advanced energy technologies. Based on the speed of the pivot to EVs, that demand could be coming even faster.

With so much talk centered on “critical minerals” many of the minerals that are vital to the technologies of tomorrow are plentiful here in the U.S. Take copper, for example. EVs use three times as much copper as the standard combustion engine vehicle. We will need to produce the same amount of copper in the next 25 years as humanity has produced in the last 5,000.

The capability of the domestic mining sector to feed this growing appetite for minerals and help drive the nation’s recovery is immense. We can and should build back better, and we should do so with minerals that are sourced here at home. In 2020 alone, the U.S. imported \$4.1 billion worth of minerals from countries like China. Unknown to many Americans, metals mining contributes raw materials that end up supplying nearly 15% of our total GDP. And as competition for minerals continue to intensify globally, the question remains if

policymakers are willing to switch to American mining before it's too late.

America's mining industry is critical to our economic recovery. One key area of focus for the Biden administration has been the plan to introduce electric vehicles, solar power and other alternative energy sources at scale. Paired with efforts to "Buy American," these campaign promises clearly can only leave one option, and that is to use American made metals.

Despite the ability to meet many of our demands using our domestic supply, we continue to import 100 percent of 17 key mineral commodities consumed each year, and more than 50 percent of the supply we need of another 29 minerals. Sourcing the lithium, silver, platinum and various other imported metals from American soil will produce thousands of jobs while securing supply chains that have been given to China and others.

What can be done on the policy front? Start with "Buy American" – a mandate that federal agencies acquire minerals from domestic sources before looking overseas. Additionally, policymakers can protect mining's designation as FAST-41-covered projects. For existing and planned mining projects that are critical to economic growth and our national security, give them the tools they need to succeed.

The process for securing necessary mine permits takes close to 10 years – compared to Australia and Canada which have similar environmental standards and practices as the U.S., but only take between two and three years. Permitting delays have been called the most significant risk to mining projects in the United States, and it shows.

Minerals are critical inputs to infrastructure, renewable energy, electric vehicles and digital technology. As these sectors of the economy grow, mineral demands will increase exponentially. The global supply chains for these minerals currently produce a bottleneck and create supply chain weaknesses. Securing U.S. supply chains can boost the U.S. economy and create high-paying jobs.

Thank you,
Rich Nolan

[Build the EV Supply Chain from the Mine Up](#)



The pivot to EVs is happening faster than anticipated, with heightened demand for metals to make the transition happen. This can be accomplished using minerals that come from American soil.

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[Mineral Commodity Summaries 2021](#)



The latest USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries revealed new data on America's alarming import reliance for critical minerals.

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