



May 19, 2023

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

Dear Madam Secretary:

On behalf of the State of North Dakota, we write in support of our increasingly important U.S. copper industry and to advocate for its inclusion on the "critical minerals" list maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Copper has been and will continue to be critical to our national security, water infrastructure and overall electrical grid infrastructure.

With this letter, we aim to elevate the criticality of copper within the United States by highlighting newly released copper supply risk data. In light of this new data, we strongly urge that your Department officially include copper on the 2021 USGS list of "critical minerals" without delay.

The original list of "critical minerals" required a 50% import penetration threshold, which copper did not meet. In 2021, a new qualitative methodology was created to look more closely at a supply risk score by calculating various minerals' economic vulnerability, disruption potential and trade exposure.

Since 2018 data, the risks to copper from imports, particularly from adversarial countries, have increased dramatically. The share of copper consumption met by net imports 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.

The State of North Dakota, partnering with world-class research universities and industry leaders, has created a scientific and regulatory foundation that makes our state a leader in carbon capture, storage and utilization.

This foundation has been crafted over the last 15-plus years, and because of this, our administration set a goal in 2021 for North Dakota to become carbon neutral by 2030. This goal is unique because it involves no new mandates or compliance requirements, consistent with our approach that favors innovation over regulation. This goal will push North Dakota to continue to lower the carbon intensity of our energy and biofuel industries by investing in innovative and state-of-the-art technologies instead of relying on burdensome and backwards-looking regulations and mandates.

To reach this goal, North Dakota industries will need access to U.S. copper to build greater amounts of renewable energy, transmission lines and carbon capture facilities on our baseload generation. This will enhance our local main street economies, increase grid stability and drive continued investment in North Dakota. Because of our unique geological jackpot of abundant energy resources and underground storage, and our stable tax and regulatory framework, we are experiencing an enormous influx of investment pouring into North Dakota to access these resources.

Whether the topic is energy or minerals, we should responsibly use our nation's natural resources instead of relying on our enemies to supply products to U.S. industries. Given copper's significant role in North Dakota's electrical grid and reaching our goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and its critical importance to national security, we strongly reiterate our recommendation to immediately add copper to the USGS list of "critical minerals."

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug Burgum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Doug Burgum
Governor