



BILL LEE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF TENNESSEE

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

Dear Madam Secretary:

On behalf of the great State of Tennessee I write to you in support of our increasingly important United States' copper industry. Copper has been and will continue to be critical to our national security, our water infrastructure, and our overall electrical grid infrastructure.

As the result of the newly released copper supply risk data, I strongly urge that your Department officially include copper on the 2021 U.S. Geological Survey list of "critical minerals" without delay.

The original List 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 the economic vulnerability, disruption potential, and trade exposure of various minerals.

Since 2018 data, 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.

Given the significant change in the supply risk to copper, I ask that you please exercise your statutory authority to officially add copper to the CML immediately, without waiting for the next update in 3 years. This designation will significantly benefit and protect the United States 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 as well as the copper miners, refineries, and other members of the industry directly create approximately 40,000 jobs in 30 U.S. states. Also, for U.S. national security purposes, copper is the second-most widely used metal by weight in U.S. defense systems.



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Copper is also critical to the electric vehicle sector. The production of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure require a substantial amount of copper. Tennessee is the top manufacturer of electric vehicles in the Southeast, with more than 180,000 electric vehicles produced in the state during the past decade. As Tennessee and our peer states continue to economically develop with a focus on new energy sources and electric vehicle manufacturing, copper and copper alloys will grow in their importance to our economy.

Given copper's major role in state and national economic development, national security, and infrastructure, I respectfully request that copper be immediately included in the USGS list of "critical minerals".

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Lee".

Bill Lee