



**INTERNATIONAL
MAGNESIUM
ASSOCIATION**

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Richard Opatick

Executive Vice President

January 14, 2003

The Honorable James Connaughton
Chairman
Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Connaughton:

It is my pleasure to announce that the International Magnesium Association (IMA) joins the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's SF₆ Emission Reduction Partnership for the Magnesium Industry in establishing a climate protection goal of eliminating sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) emissions from magnesium operations by December 31, 2010. Operating on five continents around the world, IMA's member companies represent 80 percent of the world magnesium industry. SF₆ has been widely used by the magnesium industry as a protective cover gas for more than 25 years. Once the climate impact of the SF₆ was identified, IMA began working to reduce emissions and search for viable alternative cover gases.

IMA, with EPA's support, initiated a study in mid-2000 to identify and evaluate protective cover gas alternatives to SF₆. The promising results of this continuing study are providing the industry with the confidence to establish such an aggressive climate protection goal. IMA is also pleased to recognize the recent addition of the Canadian Government to this three-year cooperative research program. IMA plans to provide education and stewardship programs to facilitate the elimination of SF₆ emissions from global magnesium operations by 2010. IMA's current studies and proactive stewardship plans demonstrate the magnesium industry's commitment to environmental protection and showcase the impressive results possible through voluntary partnerships between industry and governments.

Today, magnesium is used in a variety of markets (in aluminum alloys and as a chemical agent to desulfurize molten steel) and applications (die casting), each use taking advantage of the physical and mechanical properties of this element and its alloys. Magnesium ranks as the eighth most abundant element in the earth's crust and is classified as a light metal. By volume, it is two-thirds of the weight of aluminum and about one-quarter of the weight of steel. The main advantage of magnesium is unquestionably its weight-to-strength ratio, which is considerably better than that of competing structural metals.

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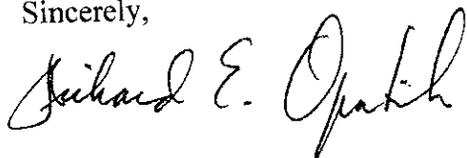
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The leading structural application of magnesium is die cast automobile parts. In fact, the use of magnesium alloy parts allows vehicle weight to be reduced and, therefore, improves fuel economy and reduces air pollution. Magnesium has an extensive history in automotive use with racing cars using magnesium parts in the 1920's and commercial applications starting in 1936. Today there is ongoing research by the magnesium industry and the US automotive industry to possibly use magnesium in powertrain applications.

Demand for magnesium is also being met by an expanding magnesium-recycling industry. Alloys used for structural applications can be recycled back into products displaying the same physical and mechanical characteristics as primary metal. This positive environmental attribute is being actively encouraged by the industry and recycling requires only 5% of the energy required to produce primary product.

The global demand for magnesium is growing. IMA members continue to improve production systems to create a net positive environmental effect and improve the sustainability of magnesium. IMA pledges to continue cooperation with EPA to successfully achieve this ambitious climate protection goal.

Sincerely,



cc: The Honorable Andrew Card
Chief of Staff to the President

The Honorable Christine Todd Whitman
Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

IMA Board of Directors and Members