



Pete Ricketts
Governor

STATE OF NEBRASKA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
P.O. Box 94848 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4848
Phone: (402) 471-2244 • pete.ricketts@nebraska.gov

July 18, 2017

MG Donald E. Jackson, Jr
Deputy Commanding General Civil & Emergency Operations (ATTN-CECW-ZA)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Major General Jackson:

I am writing to nominate the Elk Creek, NE Superalloy Project (Project) as a high-priority infrastructure project, pursuant to your January 24, 2017 Executive Order: "Expediting Environmental Reviews and Approvals For High Priority Infrastructure Projects."

Key to the success of a national infrastructure re-building is utilizing as many American-made materials as possible – particularly the high strength steels that form the backbone of America's transportation, manufacturing, and defense infrastructures. The Elk Creek Superalloy Project can help the U.S. produce American-made "super steels" for infrastructure projects across all 50 states.

The Project will establish the first-ever production in America of niobium, a metal that helps to make High Performance Steel (HPS). These super steels are increasingly used in highway bridges and in virtually all mega-steel infrastructure projects in order to reduce corrosion, lengthen lifespans, cut costs, and reduce environmental impacts. American-made HPS steel can help highway bridges last in excess of a century. That will reduce taxpayer costs and strengthen safety.

Niobium also is critical to our nation's defense infrastructure. It is vital to superalloys used in virtually all fighter jets. In fact, it is considered of such strategic importance by the Pentagon and the Congress that they directed it be stored in the National Defense Stockpile.

We need niobium, Mr. President, yet we don't mine a single pound of it in the U.S. today. Nebraska wants to change that, and as rapidly as possible.

The Elk Creek Superalloy Project is designed to be funded by the private sector and is seeking no direct U.S. Government financial assistance. It has greatly reduced its planned environmental footprint by finding innovative ways of recycling much of its waste and by operating very efficiently. It enjoys strong and broad local support in Nebraska. What it needs from the federal government is efficient coordination of NEPA and other permitting processes, so that this critical infrastructure project can be brought online as rapidly as possible without unnecessary permitting delays and government red tape.

In my view, Mr. President, the Elk Creek Superalloy Project is vital to the success of the Rebuilding America's Infrastructure initiative. As such, I nominate the Project for designation as a High-Priority Infrastructure Project. I would be pleased to discuss this with you or your staff at your convenience.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Respectfully,

CC: Janet Pfleeger, Deputy Director, Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council
DJ Gribbin, Special Assistant to the President for Infrastructure Policy
Michael Catanzaro, Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Energy and Environmental Policy