The Honorable Mary Neumayr  
Chief of Staff  
Council on Environmental Quality  
730 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503  

Dear Ms. Neumayr:

I write to request that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) designate the Round Top Rare Earths/Multi-Metal Mining Project a “High Priority Infrastructure Project” under the authority granted to the nation’s governors by President Trump’s January 24, 2017 “Executive Order Expediting Environmental Reviews and Approvals for High Priority Infrastructure Projects.”

Round Top hosts the 17 rare earth elements, including those that are essential to all major U.S. defense system platforms, such as precision-guided missiles, radar, lasers, satellites, fighter jets and submarines. However, the United States is 100 percent dependent on foreign nations for its supply. Round Top also holds deposits of rare metals like uranium, beryllium and lithium, essential to nuclear weapons systems and energy applications. Strengthening the United States’ supply of these Rare Earths will put our nation in a position to rely on domestic production, thus re-shoring our advanced technology manufacturing, and in turn, saving billions by not depending on foreign countries such as China.

Given the United States’ deep dependence on foreign-sourced Rare Earths as well as other critical metals and minerals that will be produced by the Round Top project, I urge that the CEQ act to designate Round Top a “high priority” infrastructure project. As Governor of Texas, I welcome this opportunity to put Texas at the forefront of a renaissance in Rare Earth resource development that will make America stronger economically and ensure our U.S. military remains second to none.

Sincerely,

Greg Abbott  
Governor

Enclosures
December 12, 2017

Governor Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
State Insurance Building
1100 San Jacinto
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Governor Abbott:

I write to urge you to submit the Round Top mining project for designation as a “high priority infrastructure project.” The Trump Administration’s Executive Order Expediting Environmental Reviews and Approvals for High Priority Infrastructure Projects requires such a request to originate from the Office of the Governor.

In the case of Rare Earths, critical elements in all major U.S. defense platforms, as well as high tech applications in the U.S. are 100% import-dependent for its supply. This is a significant national security issue which needs to be rectified immediately.

The timely development of the Round Top project would put Texas at the forefront of the critical metals supply chain with a projected 150-year mine life providing a range of rare metals. Round Top is a critical metals “strategic reserve,” and the project has the potential to be a significant boon economically to the state of Texas and the Permanent School Fund.

Given the importance of this project and its potential impact to the state of Texas and the country, I ask that you submit the Round Top project to the White House Council on Environmental Quality for consideration as a “high priority infrastructure project.” For additional information, please contact Kaleh Bennett, Assistant Director of Governmental Relations, at 512-463-5363.

Sincerely,

GEORGE P. BUSH
Commissioner, General Land Office

1700 North Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701-1495
P.O. Box 12873, Austin, Texas 78711-2873
512-463-5001 glo.texas.gov
On January 24, 2017, President Trump signed an Executive Order, “expediting environmental reviews and approvals for High Priority Infrastructure Projects.” Recently, it came to my attention that Texas Mineral Resources, a company located in Texas’ 23rd Congressional district, is developing the Round Top Heavy Rare Earth Project, which may meet the criteria for designation as a “high priority” infrastructure project outlined in President Trump’s Executive Order.

To date, the United States is 100% dependent on foreign nations for rare earths with most originating from China. Rare earth production is essential to our military’s weapons platform. Every DoD platform requires rare earths, especially the heavy rare earths which presently can only be mined in China. A new U.S. source of high-quality critical Rare Earths will meet key policy goals related to economic development, competitiveness and job creation in the context of the Trump Administration’s Infrastructure Program.

Expediting the Round Top Project would serve as a critical catalyst for the United States to gain ground in the race to mine rare earths. Studies have indicated that the global rare earth metals market will have an average annual compounded growth rate of 13.67% by 2021. The Round Top Project is home to rare earths including, uranium, lithium, scandium, and beryllium to name a few. Strengthening the United States’ supply of these rare earths will put our nation in a position to rely on domestic production and save billions by not depending on foreign countries such as China and Bolivia.

Given the strategic nature of this project to both the United States and Texas, I ask that you strongly consider submitting the Round Top project to the White House Council on Environmental Quality for consideration as a “high priority” infrastructure project. Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 202-225-4511.

Sincerely,

WILL HURD
Member of Congress