



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

March 23, 2018

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for your February 20, 2018 letter requesting that the Round Top Rare Earths/Multi-Metal Mining Project be identified as a high priority infrastructure project pursuant to Executive Order 13766. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has been coordinating with other Federal agencies, including the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (Permitting Council), to align various permitting improvement and infrastructure initiatives.

On August 15, 2017, the President signed Executive Order 13807 which directs Federal agencies to use existing coordination provisions to expedite the environmental review requirements for priority infrastructure projects. Under Executive Order 13807, projects which meet the criteria for, and are subject to, 23 U.S.C. 139 (Transportation Projects), 33 U.S.C. 2348 (Water Resource Development Projects), or 42 U.S.C. 4370m *et. seq.* (Covered Projects under Title 41 of the FAST Act) will qualify as high priority infrastructure projects under Executive Order 13766. Other projects that are subject to similar Federal environmental review and authorization streamlining processes, as may be determined by the Executive Director of the Permitting Council in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget and CEQ, also qualify as high priority infrastructure projects.

CEQ has reviewed the Round Top Rare Earths/Multi-Metal Mining Project, which was the subject of your February 20 letter, and the Preliminary Economic Assessment prepared for Texas Rare Earth Resources. The Preliminary Economic Assessment indicates several bases for potential Federal permitting jurisdiction, although the exact nature and extent of Federal permitting jurisdiction has not been determined. Based on

that review, CEQ has notified the Executive Director of the Permitting Council that the Round Top Rare Earths/Multi-Metal Mining Project may qualify as a high priority infrastructure project. A representative of the Permitting Council will be reaching out to your office to seek more information on this project's eligibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Neumayr".

Mary Neumayr
Chief of Staff

CC: Janet Pfleeger, Acting Executive Director of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council
Douglas Hoelscher, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of White House Intergovernmental Affairs