



CHAIRMAN

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

June 4, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 202050

Dear Secretary Perdue:

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) received a letter from Alaska Governor Michael Dunleavy dated August 9, 2019 requesting the Bokan – Dotson Ridge Project be identified as a high priority infrastructure project pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13766, “Expediting Environmental Reviews and Approvals for High Priority Infrastructure Projects.”

Under E.O. 13766, the Chairman of CEQ is required to determine whether an infrastructure project qualifies as a “high priority” infrastructure project in response to a request of a Governor of a State or the head of any executive department or agency. E.O. 13807, “Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects,” provided further direction on the types of projects that may qualify as high priority infrastructure projects and how the criteria of E.O. 13766 may be satisfied.

The Bokan – Dotson Ridge Project is a proposed rare earth element (REE) project located on the shores of Kendrick Bay on Prince of Wales Island, in southeast Alaska. The project developer proposes the development of a mine and processing facility. The United States remains heavily reliant on imports of certain critical minerals, including REEs, which are vital to the Nation's security and economic prosperity. Numerous items including military equipment, advanced batteries, wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal steam turbines, and most high-tech consumer goods, contain REEs. As a domestic project, the Bokan – Dotson Ridge Project may assist in reducing our Nation's dependence on imports, preserve our leadership in technological innovation, and support job creation.

It is CEQ's understanding that the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) has not received a completed Plan of Operations for the Bokan – Dotson Ridge Project. Given the lack of complete information to evaluate the project in accordance with E.O. 13766 and E.O. 13807, CEQ is unable to designate the Bokan – Dotson Ridge Project as a high priority infrastructure project at this time. If the Forest Service receives a completed Plan of Operations and determines that an environmental impact statement is required, CEQ requests that the Forest Service conduct the environmental review in a timely manner consistent with E.O. 13807, the One Federal Decision policy, and the related Memorandum of Understanding executed in April 2018. CEQ also

requests that the Forest Service provide CEQ with periodic updates regarding the status of the environmental review.

CEQ looks forward to working with your staff to ensure efficient and timely environmental reviews and authorization decisions. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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

Mary B. Neumayr
Chairman