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May 12, 2025

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Wright,

We write in strong support of the administration's efforts to revitalize the domestic steel and aluminum industries, specifically the federal investments that will increase metals production for the defense industrial base. Targeted Department of Energy funding is essential to achieving the President's stated goals of rebuilding American manufacturing, ensuring national defense readiness, and securing domestic supply chains for critical materials.

SAFE is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization committed to transportation and energy policy solutions that ensure the economic and national security of the United States. Since 2005, SAFE has worked with its Energy Security Leadership Council (ESLC)—a coalition of business leaders and retired 4-star admirals and generals—to advance our mission.

We agree that American and global demand for critical dual-use minerals and materials will continue to surge for conventional and emerging industries, and for warfighting capabilities. In the coming decade, where these strategic industrial materials come from and how they are produced will have profound consequences on America's national security and economic competitiveness. In the 1950s, America was the leading producer of both steel and aluminum—today we produce only 4% of global steel, while aluminum production is less than 2% of global production. While tariffs have a role to play in leveling the playing field for domestic producers, project specific support is needed to offset other domestic challenges including permitting, labor, and energy costs.

Aluminum and steel are used in a wide range of defense applications, from military aircraft and naval vessels to armored vehicles and advanced weapon systems. Yet today, the United States remains dangerously reliant on foreign sources for the raw materials and industrial capacity needed for defense applications.

Any disruption in the steel and aluminum supply chain—whether due to foreign dependency, economic instability, or industrial base vulnerabilities—poses a significant risk to our military readiness and operational capabilities. Therefore, we encourage the Department to move forward with investments for:

- Century Aluminum’s green field primary aluminum smelter, which will double current domestic production and produce high-purity aluminum for defense applications.
- Cleveland Cliffs for their Middletown Works in Ohio and Butler Works in Pennsylvania to increase domestic production of high strength steel, and electrical steel used in power transformers.
- Constellium for their Ravenswood, West Virginia facility to increase domestic production of plate, sheet, and coil products for aerospace, defense, transportation, and industrial uses

These awards support the broader “America First” vision for revitalizing domestic industry and rebuilding the middle class through strong, strategic manufacturing. These grants send a clear signal that the United States is serious about reshoring critical production capacity and delivering on the promise of an American industrial renaissance. This support will bolster critical mineral and metal self-sufficiency, strengthen the U.S. defense industrial base, and counter decades of industrial erosion.

We commend the Department of Energy for recognizing the strategic importance of metals and taking decisive action. Continued federal leadership—including swift deployment of these grants and expansion of related efforts—will ensure that America is prepared to meet the challenges of the next industrial era with strength and self-reliance.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe Quinn
Executive Director
Center for Strategic Industrial Materials
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Cc:

The Honorable Howard Lutnick, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
The Honorable Pete Hegseth, Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense