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April 27, 2026

United States House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources  
1333 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Re: Letter for the Record; April 29 Subcommittee Hearing "*Powering the 21st Century with American Copper*"

Dear Members of the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources; Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources:

The Alaska Miners Association (AMA) writes to provide a letter for the record for the United States House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing "*Powering the 21st Century with American Copper.*"

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,400 members that come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, and major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

First, AMA wishes to express our gratitude to the Subcommittee for holding a hearing on this critically important topic. Discussion focused on the January [report](#) by S&P Global, "*Copper in the age of AI,*" which evaluates the future global outlook for copper supply and demand, will showcase how dire the situation really is.

Copper is a critical, foundational material needed for modern society to thrive. It is essential for electricity transmission, defense technologies, telecommunications, renewable energy, and both traditional and electric vehicles – just to name a few. As demand continues to accelerate, the United States will remain becoming increasingly reliant on foreign sources of copper if immediate action is not taken. And we have nobody to blame but ourselves.

There are substantial copper resources across the United States, however, the existing regulatory climate has severely constrained, and in many cases fully blocked their development. At best, copper projects are constrained by lengthy permitting timelines, regulatory uncertainty, and limited investment incentives. At worst, projects are stopped through frivolous litigation or adverse actions by

the federal government. These delays and obstacles place our country at a competitive disadvantage and limit our ability to meet rising demand with responsibly produced domestic materials.

Another S&P global [report](#) produced in July 2024, “*Mine Development Times – the U.S. in Perspective*,” found that our country has the second longest lead time to permit a mine. At 29 years, we are only above the country of Zambia, which permits a mine at an average of 34 years. From this report: “*The long U.S. lead times stand in contrast to the country's sizeable resource base. The U.S. copper endowment (more than 275 million metric tons in reserves and resources) is comparable to those of Canada and Australia combined and sufficient to satisfy domestic demand for the foreseeable future.*”

From an Alaska mining industry perspective, our state offers tremendous copper resources that could and should be pursued to bring significant domestic production online. However, of eight producing large mines in Alaska, only one, the Greens Creek Mine, produces minor byproduct copper alongside silver, zinc, gold, and lead. Massive deposits exist across the state, but for aforementioned reasons, they are not currently in production or development. Notable examples include:

#### The Pebble Project

Pebble is the country's largest known undeveloped copper deposit and as such could make a significant contribution to filling the domestic production gap. When the project went into permitting, it estimated a 20-year mining plan with 145,000 metric tons of copper production each year and a total of 2.9 million metric tons produced over the life of the mine. At current supply and demand levels, it is estimated that Pebble development could provide up to 20% of our domestic copper needs. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) twice chose to take action to preemptively veto the project under the Clean Water Act Section 404c process. The first veto, in 2014, was done prior to any permit application having been submitted, and the action was based on a hypothetical mining scenario. In 2019, the veto was withdrawn by the EPA as the project entered into the permitting process. A rigorous environmental review process took place and ultimately, a [Final Environmental Impact Statement \(FEIS\)](#) concluded that the project could be done without harm to the salmon fishery in Bristol Bay. The project proceeded with applying for the 404 permit required, but ultimately, in January 2023, the EPA issued another preemptive decision. This time, the decision not only vetoed the proposed project, but all metal mining in over 330 square miles of land surrounding the project footprint. Today, the decision remains in litigation.

#### Ambler Mining District

The Ambler Mining District contains several viable deposits of many critical minerals, but the copper endowment is what makes this a potentially world class mining district. However, despite access to the district being expressly provided for in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation [Act](#) (ANILCA), proposals to construct a road to incentivize exploration and development have been thwarted. In 2020, federal agencies approved the initial Record of Decision and Right of Way permits. However, through 2022-2024, the project was rejected by federal agencies and litigation ensued causing uncertainty to investors about the various projects. Thankfully, on Day 1 of the Trump

Administration, [E.O 14241: Unlocking Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential](#) was issued that directed agencies to place a moratorium on the adverse decision in the 2024 SEIS. This was followed by action in October, 2025, when President Trump approved the [appeal](#) of the SEIS and directed “...his Administration to promptly issue authorizations necessary for the establishment of the Ambler Road Project.” Progress on the access road required to unlock the copper resources from this district is encouraging, but uncertainty from long permitting timelines, litigation, and future policy actions remains.

Other significant deposits of copper include Johnson Tract, Illinois Creek, Wiseman, Nikolai, Palmer, and Whistler. Please see project profiles and a map on AMA's annual economic benefits report [here](#).

Alaska, with its incredible endowment of minerals, can be a key jurisdiction to grow and stockpile copper reserves for the United States. The alarm of dependency on foreign and often adverse nations is not new; however, this Subcommittee is to be applauded for addressing the situation now.

We urge you to remain focused on permitting reform and litigation reform that will provide certainty to those investors who want to develop Alaska's and America's copper to its fullest potential, as well as to continue work on codifying President Trump's resource development Executive Orders which are already making a proven difference in the mining industry.

We appreciate your leadership and consideration, and welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Deantha Skibinski  
Executive Director