

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Wright:

We are writing to express our support for the University of North Dakota's (UND) proposal submitted under DE-FOA-0003583, "*Mines & Metals Capacity Expansion – Piloting Byproduct Critical Minerals and Materials Recovery at Domestic Industrial Facilities.*" Thank you for your consideration.

This project represents an important step toward securing the domestic supply chain for rare earth elements and critical minerals while advancing innovative uses of North Dakota's lignite resources. For many years, UND and its partners have made significant progress developing technologies that can recover high-value minerals and carbon products from lignite. North Dakota has the experience, regulatory environment, and workforce to lead in this area. UND's proposed demonstration project at the Falkirk Mine builds on more than a decade of federal, state, and private-sector investment and aligns with national priorities for energy security, economic competitiveness, and responsible resource development.

North Dakota has long played a central role in strengthening America's energy independence. Projects like this directly support that mission by leveraging our abundant natural resources, world-class mining operations, and strong research capabilities. The demonstration proposed by UND represents the next logical step toward commercial deployment and broader contribution to the critical mineral supply chain.

Accordingly, we hope UND's proposal receives your favorable consideration. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. Please keep us informed of the review process, and feel free to contact our offices with any updates or inquiries you may have.

Sincerely,



John Hoeven
U.S. Senator



Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator



Julie Fedorchak
Member of Congress