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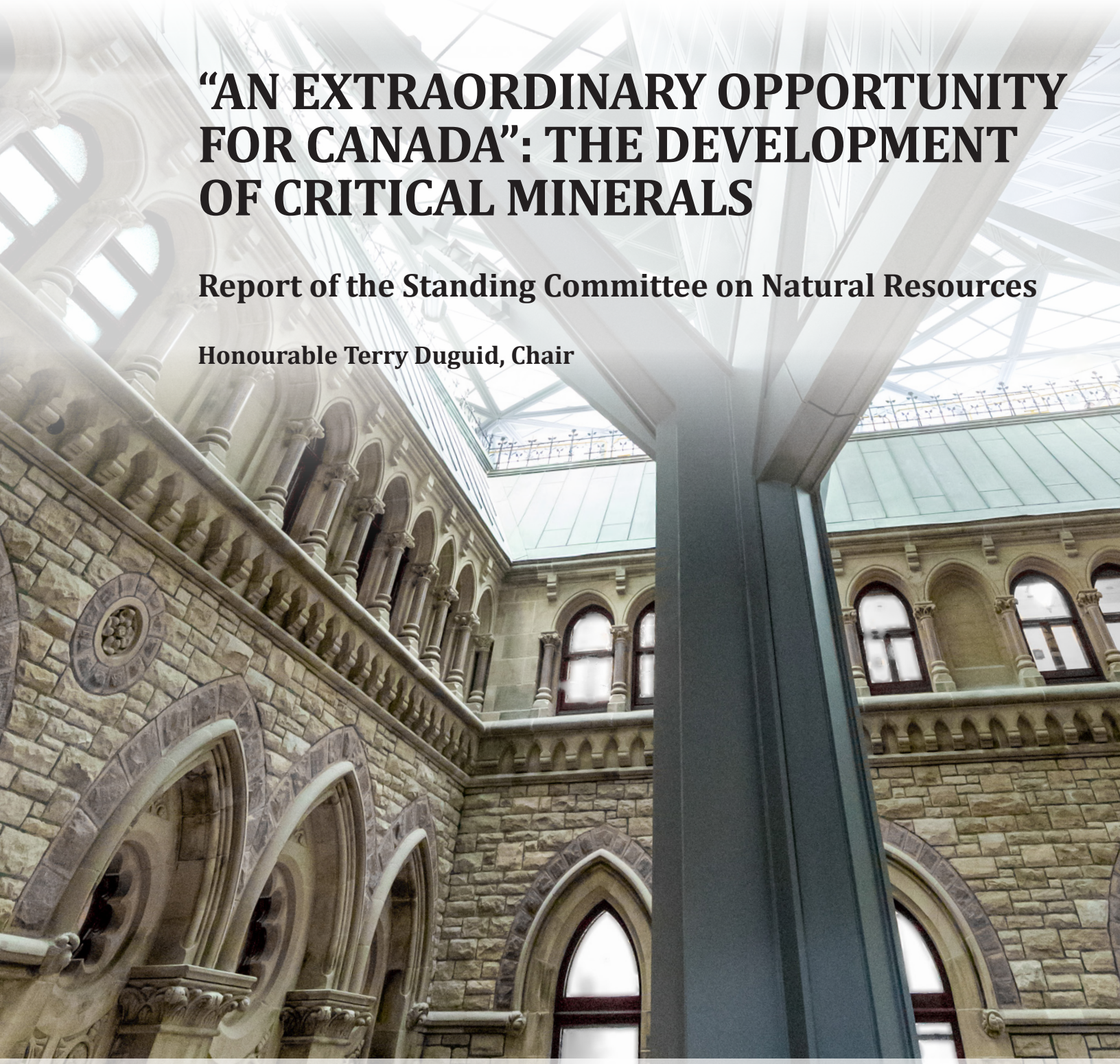

“AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY FOR CANADA”: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL MINERALS

Report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources

Honourable Terry Duguid, Chair

MAY 2026
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied development of critical minerals in Canada and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

"AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY FOR CANADA"[1]: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL MINERALS

INTRODUCTION

The mining sector is a major building block of the Canadian economy, having contributed $117 billion to the national gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023,[2] and providing one in every 30 jobs across the country, according to the Mining Association of Canada.[3] Mining products, particularly critical minerals, are part of the daily lives of Canadians, and in recent years their importance has become more apparent due to factors such as the global energy shift towards electrification and battery power, supply chain concerns, geopolitical issues, and a renewed focus on defence.[4]

In this context, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources (the Committee) agreed to conduct a study on critical minerals in Canada. Over the course of seven meetings, the Committee heard from over 30 witnesses representing major mining companies, junior and exploration companies,[5] Indigenous organizations, and academics. Some members of the Committee also travelled to Saguenay, Quebec and Sudbury, Ontario to meet with local representatives and visit key infrastructure and mineral processing sites as part of the Committee's study. The Committee received more than 40 written briefs for its consideration over the course of this study, demonstrating a strong public interest in the subject of critical mineral development.

1 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Natural Resources (RNNR), *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1115 (John Mullally, Head of External Relations and Social Performance, Newmont Canada, Newmont Corporation).

2 Government of Canada, "Nominal GDP in the minerals sector," *Minerals and the economy*, 25 June 2025.

3 The Mining Association of Canada, *Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources*, 27 October 2025, p. 1.

4 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1105 (Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector, Department of Natural Resources); RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1210 (Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, as an individual).

5 Junior companies do not have an operational mine to provide a source of revenue, and rely on equity markets to raise capital for their exploration. Government of Canada, "Mineral exploration," *Minerals and the economy*, 25 June 2025.

The Committee's report begins by contextualizing the development of critical minerals in Canada, then describes the advantages Canada has in the sector. It examines barriers to the development of critical minerals, then details the opportunities that exist for Canada relating to critical minerals. Finally, the report examines the "Corridor du Nord", a proposed infrastructure project to link Ontario and Quebec for the benefit of critical minerals exports. This report summarizes the Committee's findings and provides recommendations for the Government of Canada to address regarding the development of critical minerals in Canada.

CONTEXT

What are Critical Minerals?

Isabella Chan, a senior assistant deputy minister at Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), explained to the Committee that the Canadian critical minerals list contains 34 elements. To be considered critical, a mineral must either be essential to the security of Canada's economy, required for Canada's national transition to a low-carbon economy, or highly strategic for Canadian allies and partners.[6] Ms. Chan explained that to develop the list, Natural Resources Canada consults with industry and Indigenous groups in order to reflect market demands. It also considers what Canada can produce domestically, as well as the needs of other countries considered to be Canada's allies.[7]

Critical minerals are most often obtained via mining, but witnesses also reminded the Committee about the possibility of obtaining these minerals through recycling. Isabella Chan of NRCan stated "on the recycling side, too, let's not forget that we often think about critical minerals as mining projects, but actually, the whole value chain includes recycling as well as processing. Many of our critical minerals are actually by-products of processing that we do,"[8] while representatives from Glencore told Committee members in Sudbury that recycling can be viewed as "urban mining" and allows for the use of production scrap and battery components, amongst other materials.[9]

6 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1115 (Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector, Department of Natural Resources).

7 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1115 (Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector, Department of Natural Resources).

8 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1125 (Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector, Department of Natural Resources).

9 RNNR, meeting with Glencore representatives in Sudbury, ON, 15 November 2025.

Why are Critical Minerals Important?

Ms. Chan told the Committee that "Critical minerals are the foundation upon which modern technology is built. They are strategic assets essential to our national and economic security."[10] According to Daniel Alessi, a professor at the University of Alberta, critical minerals are essential to technology such as "lithium-ion batteries, permanent magnets, electric motors, solar panels, wind turbines, semiconductors, and other components in advanced manufacturing." He also noted that as demand for low-carbon technology increases, so too will the demand for critical minerals.[11]

Mining critical minerals composes an important sector in Canada's economy, as the mining sector as a whole contributed to 6% of Canada's GDP in 2023.[12] According to Jeff Stibbard of JDS Energy and Mining Inc., "in 2023, $30 billion was contributed to the [Canadian] economy by critical minerals, and nearly 55,000 people were employed in that."[13]

Jurisdictional Matters

Provincial and Territorial Jurisdiction

In general, the provinces and territories have primary jurisdiction over minerals, mining and energy resources, under section 92(10) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. The provincial and territorial jurisdiction over minerals covers exploration for, and development, conservation and management of, mineral deposits as well as regulating production levels. It also includes jurisdiction over mines at all stages of their lifecycle, from development to abandonment and reclamation, as well as upgrading facilities and other installations of that nature relating to minerals.[14]

Federal Jurisdiction

Federal jurisdiction – an exception to the general rule – extends to resources on federal lands, on First Nations reserves and in Nunavut; to nuclear energy and nuclear

10 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1105 (Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector, Department of Natural Resources).

11 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1710 (Daniel Alessi, Professor, University of Alberta).

12 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1140 (Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector, Department of Natural Resources); IOS Géosciences, *Brief on the State of Canada's Natural Resources Industry*, 20 October 2025, p. 2.

13 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1545 (Jeff Stibbard, Executive Chairman, JDS Energy and Mining Inc.).

14 Dwight Newman, *Natural Resource Jurisdiction in Canada*, 2013, p. 66.

substances such as uranium; to international and interprovincial aspects of resource management; and to certain environmental subjects, such as fisheries and toxic substances that may be related to resource development.[15]

Indigenous Rights-Holders and the Duty to Consult

Indigenous peoples hold Aboriginal and treaty rights that have the potential of constraining the federal and provincial governments from exercising jurisdiction over natural resources, including minerals.[16] In a series of decisions, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that when the Crown is contemplating conduct – such as approving a new mine – that might adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights, the Crown has a duty to consult and potentially accommodate the Indigenous rights holders.[17]

Several witnesses clearly stated the importance of proper consultation with Indigenous rights-holders and Indigenous communities regarding critical mineral development. Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, reminded the Committee that "[F]irst [N]ations maintain sovereignty over their lands and over their waters and territories. The development of critical minerals must include the free, prior and informed consent of [F]irst [N]ations."[18] Sheldon Wuttunee told the Committee "Consultation is an extremely important component when it comes to the development of critical minerals […] these are our treaty and traditional territories, and we're not going anywhere."[19] He also reminded the Committee of the "nation-to-nation relationship as [F]irst [N]ation governments with the Government of Canada."[20]

Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak called on the federal government to ensure that all laws and policies related to resource development conform to the *United Nations Declaration on*

15 Dwight Newman, *Natural Resource Jurisdiction in Canada*, 2013, p. 66.

16 Ibid.

17 Government of Canada, *Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation – Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult*, March 2011. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada has engaged in consultation on these guidelines, with the aim of releasing an updated version in 2026.

18 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1105 (Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations).

19 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1120 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

20 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1135 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This stance was supported by other Indigenous groups in written briefs submitted to the Committee.[21]

Sharleen Gale of the First Nations Major Projects Coalition acknowledged the "nation-building" opportunity for Canada and First Nations presented by the development of critical minerals, while emphasizing that acting on this opportunity "must be rooted in economic partnership." She stated that because "most [mineral] deposits are in Indigenous territories, development must proceed with free, prior and informed consent every step of the way."[22] Paul Blom of the BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council echoed this statement, saying "project certainty and performance, therefore, depend on recognition of free, prior and informed consent, and co-governance with the rights holders who steward those lands."[23]

Peter Fleming from the Manitoba Métis Federation emphasized to the Committee that "Red River Métis are section 35 rights holders. Their inclusion in the development of critical minerals is non-negotiable from a rights perspective."[24] He explained that "often the Métis get forgotten and those [capacity-building] dollars flow more to the [F]irst [N]ation entities that the government is dealing with" and that while Métis have been "included partially" there is work to be done to achieve proper inclusion.[25]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

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21 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1105 (Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations); Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly, *Brief to House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources on the Development of Critical Minerals in Canada Study*, written brief, 23 October 2025, p. 4; BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council, *First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy*, written brief, March 2024, p. 60; RESOLVE, *Indigenous Governance and Rights in Critical Minerals Development in Canada*, written brief, 23 October 2025, p. 2.

22 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1210 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

23 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1220 (Paul Blom, Chief Operating Officer, BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council).

24 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1650 (Peter Fleming, Minister of Natural Resources, Manitoba Métis Federation).

25 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1700 (Peter Fleming, Minister of Natural Resources, Manitoba Métis Federation).

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada should advance critical mineral projects in the full respect of Indigenous rights, including robust consultations with Indigenous rights holders in order to secure their free, prior, and informed consent on proposed projects.

Global Factors Driving Markets

The Impacts of Russia, China, and Tariffs from the United States

Recent geopolitical shifts are having an impact on the global demand for critical minerals and support for their development in Canada, witnesses told the Committee. Chad Ulansky of Cantex Mine Development listed the green energy transition, geopolitical tensions with China and Russia, and tariffs from the United States as reasons for an increased focus on mining and critical minerals in Canada.[26] He stated that "our allies around the world" are eager to see if Canada can replace Russia and China as sources of critical minerals, due to these two countries "now withholding these metals for competitive and military gain."[27]

Richard Dunn from the Helium Developers Association of Canada told the Committee of the importance of Canadian helium, explaining that semiconductor companies based in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea are concerned about over-reliance on Russian helium and the partnership that Russia has with China. However, he mentioned Canadian helium producers are also facing challenges due to the current "low-price environment when we see Russian helium saturating the market."[28]

Several witnesses highlighted the impact of China's critical mineral production. One issue is the country's ability to flood markets with product, causing global prices to drop. Examples of critical minerals in this situation include nickel and cobalt. During the Committee's visit to Sudbury, municipal officials explained that the oversupply of Chinese nickel causes the global price to drop, thus vastly limiting the capacity of companies to open new nickel mines.[29] Robin Goad of Fortune Metals Limited explained

26 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1120, 1125 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

27 Ibid.

28 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1550 (Richard Dunn, Executive Director, Helium Developers Association of Canada).

29 Meeting with municipal and regional representatives, 15 November 2025, Sudbury.

that Chinese overproduction of cobalt has made it uneconomical to mine anywhere else, as the cost of extraction is now more than cobalt's market price.[30]

According to Pierre Gratton of the Mining Association of Canada, China has export restrictions on gallium and germanium, as well as "licensing requirements or selective bans" on graphite, antimony, tungsten, tellurium, indium and several rare earth elements. He explained that "China also maintains roughly 85% to 90% of the world's rare earth refining and separation capacity and dominates the production of rare earth magnets and other downstream components."[31] Mr. Gratton emphasized that "for Canada and its allies, this concentration [in China] underscores the urgent need to expand mining production and build and diversify refining, recycling and magnet-manufacturing capacity outside of China."[32] Chad Ulansky further highlighted the need to source germanium outside of China, due to its important applications in military equipment, fibre optics, and LED lighting.[33]

While visiting the Port of Saguenay, port officials explained to members of the Committee that there was a much higher volume of aluminum ingots (blocks of pure aluminum ready for further processing) on site during their visit than would usually have been present, due to a reduction in exporting aluminum to the United States brought on by the imposition tariffs on aluminum by the United States.[34]

Canada's Competitive Advantage

Witnesses frequently mentioned three major advantages Canada has: its vast deposits of minerals, including critical minerals; its reputation and status as a stable mining jurisdiction; and its workforce across the country. Sandeep Singh stated "we have the resources the world needs and we have the talent required to extract them sustainably."[35] Chad Ulansky also mentioned Canada's "abundance of mineral wealth" as

30 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1630 (Robin Goad, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fortune Minerals Limited).

31 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1535 (Pierre Gratton, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mining Association of Canada).

32 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1535 (Pierre Gratton, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mining Association of Canada).

33 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1255 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

34 Meeting with representatives from Port of Saguenay, 12 November 2025, Saguenay.

35 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1125 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

well as its stability, saying "It's very difficult to find a place elsewhere around the world where you can put in a mine and it is done socially, environmentally and governmentally responsibly."[36] Jeff Gaulin of Vale stated "we are a safe, secure, rule-of-law jurisdiction. We have labour peace. We have infrastructure. We have talent."[37] Daniel Alessi believes that Canada's stability and strong regulatory environment, as well as respect for Indigenous land rights, gives the country "a competitive advantage in providing minerals that are sourced responsibly, which should be incentivized and will matter increasingly to buyers, governments and other partners around the world."[38]

Regarding Canada's workforce, Daniel Alessi described the advantage of Canadian postdoctoral students collaborating with industry to contribute to research and development through the NSERC Alliance Advantage Program; he highlighted that the United States does not offer a similar funding program.[39] Meg Gingrich stated that Canada's advantages over other jurisdictions are its respect for strong workers' rights, high health and safety standards, and high wages for mining jobs achieved through collective bargaining over time.[40]

Witnesses cautioned against perceiving other mining jurisdictions as superior based on their permitting timelines or operational costs. Sandeep Singh gave the example of a mine being approved in Panama, but then being shut down after two years in production due to permitting concerns. He stated that once a mine is operational in Canada, it's "the best place in the world to have it."[41] Jeff Gaulin explained that in Brazil and Indonesia, obtaining mining permits is faster, but building a mine and accessing infrastructure may still face questioning and delays.[42] Réjean Girard explained that "it

36 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1155 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

37 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1555 (Jeff Gaulin, Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Vale Base Metals Canada).

38 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1710 (Daniel Alessi, Professor, University of Alberta).

39 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1740 (Daniel Alessi, Professor, University of Alberta).

40 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1250 (Meg Gingrich, Assistant to the National Director, United Steelworkers Union).

41 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1225 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

42 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1610 (Jeff Gaulin, Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Vale Base Metals Canada).

costs just as much to work in Africa as it does here," saying the view that Canada's costs are higher than in other jurisdictions is "a myth."[43]

Another advantage is that public support for mining in Canada is currently much higher than in the past, according to Pierre Gratton, who cited a Mining Association of Canada survey showing 82% of respondents supporting mining in Canada. He also mentioned another survey listing mining as the top economic sector that gave Canadians confidence about the future.[44]

Canada is recognized internationally as a leader in low-carbon mining, which is a competitive advantage as buyers along supply chains are increasingly examining how minerals are produced, Photinie Koutsavlis told the Committee. However, she also explained that maintaining a careful balance between economic competitiveness and "climate ambition" of net-zero emissions by 2050 through tools such as carbon pricing, is essential.[45]

BARRIERS TO CRITICAL MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

Financing

Several witnesses cited the challenge of raising capital for mining projects as a barrier to critical mineral development.[46] This situation applies particularly to junior mining companies, Chad Ulansky explained, as they are not yet able to extract minerals to sell and generate profits, so are more dependent on capital investment.[47] Robin Goad told the Committee that "the chartered banks basically control the brokerage and capital markets in Canada" and do not allow investing in junior mining companies; he also observed that Canadian pension funds "don't invest in Canadian equities, let alone junior equities."[48] Chad Ulansky also stated his wish for Canadian pension funds to invest

43 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1735 (Réjean Girard, Geologist, IOS Géosciences).

44 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1535 (Pierre Gratton, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mining Association of Canada).

45 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1630 (Photinie Koutsavlis, Vice-President, Economic Affairs and Climate Change, Mining Association of Canada).

46 See for example RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1110 (Isabella Chan); 2 October 2025 (David Cataford); 6 October 2025 (Eric Desaulniers); 20 October 2025, 1600 (Jeff Stibbard, Executive Chairman, JDS Energy and Mining Inc.).

47 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1120 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

48 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1645 (Robin Goad, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fortune Minerals Limited).

in Canadian mining, and David Cataford suggested that pension funds might be key partners in raising capital for mining infrastructure in the Labrador Trough.[49] Jeff Gaulin also recommended "Canadian pension funds should be encouraged to invest more into Canadian natural resources, particularly critical minerals."[50]

Mark Tory echoed the difficulties of junior companies where financing is concerned, especially for feasibility studies.[51] Cindy Valence explained that while some government programs offer support to junior companies during the exploration phase of a mining project, there is no support available at the project phase, when costly pre-feasibility and feasibility studies must be undertaken. She expressed interest in having the federal government become "involved much further upstream" with programs offering support for mining projects.[52]

Eric Desaulniers explained that for a mining company of any size, "the challenge is to make sure that the capital markets stay interested in critical minerals all of the time, not in a very cyclical way."[53]

David Cataford described a particular problem in raising capital for mining infrastructure, saying that "if I borrow [money] as Champion Iron, it's going to cost me a whole lot more than if I borrow it as infrastructure company X." He suggested that being able to separate the financing of mining infrastructure from financing the mining itself would alleviate the challenges.[54]

49 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1120 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.); RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1255 (David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer, Champion Iron).

50 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1545 (Jeff Gaulin, Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Vale Base Metals).

51 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1625 (Mark Tory, President and Chief Executive Officer, Defense Metals Corp.).

52 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1240 (Cindy Valence, Vice President, Sustainability and Government Affairs, Commerce Resources Corp.).

53 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1655 (Eric Desaulniers, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer, Nouveau Monde Graphite).

54 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1230 (David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer, Champion Iron).

Federal Government Support

Regarding government funding, Lisa Riley described her consortium's challenges accessing federal government funding, describing federal programs as "trying to fit problems into boxes. It has to correspond to a box, or it doesn't work."[55]

Current tax credits are a source of frustration for some witnesses. John Mullally indicated to the Committee that the Clean Technology Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit currently has a threshold for copper of 90%, meaning the extracted ore must contain 90% copper, which makes "most of the copper in Canada not eligible for this particular tax credit." He suggested lowering the threshold from 90% to 50% to make more copper projects eligible for the tax credit, which he said would then encourage major investment.[56] Jeff Gaulin explained that he can "buy a pickup truck, for example, and receive a 30% tax credit" while none of the "underground infrastructure—such as lighting, electricity and infrastructure used to keep mines safe—is eligible for tax credits."[57] Richard Dunn stated "the uncompetitive tax treatment that helium receives is a real problem." He also listed flow-through shares,[58] which "are responsible for 70% of financing for nascent exploration," as a "tool that helium currently doesn't have access to."[59] Representatives from Arianne Phosphate also told Committee members that although phosphate is a critical mineral, it is not among the minerals that qualify for the critical minerals tax credit.[60]

Mark Tory told the Committee that obtaining government funding for a mining project makes it much more attractive to potential investors. Representatives from Arianne Phosphate also made this point to members of the Committee during their visit to the Saguenay region.[61] David Cataford mentioned that private investments can be made for infrastructure if government first shows its support for a project, saying "investments for

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55 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1225 (Lisa Riley, CEO and Managing Director, Vital Metals).

56 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1240 (John Mullally, Head of External Relations and Social Performance, Newmont Canada).

57 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1605 (Jeff Gaulin, Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Vale Base Metals).

58 A flow-through share allows a corporation to raise funds for mineral exploration by 'flowing through' some expenses to a share purchaser. The expenses are then considered incurred by the investor and not the corporation. The share purchaser can then claim a deduction on their taxable income. Government of Canada, *Tax incentives for mining and exploration*, 20 March 2025.

59 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1615 (Richard Dunn, Executive Director, Helium Developers Association of Canada).

60 Meeting with Arianne Phosphate representatives, 12 November 2025, Saguenay.

61 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1645 (Mark Tory, President and Chief Executive Officer, Defense Metals Corp.); meeting with Arianne Phosphate representatives, 12 November 2025, Saguenay.

infrastructure can be there if there is support from the government and if it's also for projects that are recognized in a streamlined fashion."[62]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada should increase the eligibility of its tax credits for critical minerals to support more critical mineral projects from exploration to pre-feasibility and feasibility studies.

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada extend the critical mineral exploration tax credit to all 34 critical minerals at the same level.

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada provide a ten-year extension for the critical mineral exploration tax credit, the clean technology manufacturing investment tax credit and the mineral exploration tax credit.

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada lower the threshold from 90% to 50% to make more copper projects eligible for the clean technology manufacturing investment tax credit.

Permits, Environmental Assessments, Consultation

Witnesses generally agreed that strong regulations, including environmental protections, and consultation with Indigenous communities are important to ensuring quality mining projects that can be supported by investors and the public. Pierre Gratton told the Committee of the importance of maintaining "responsible mineral production and prioritization of relationships with Indigenous communities," adding that "rushing or circumventing the constitutional duty to consult, will only set us back."[63] However,

62 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1250 (David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer, Champion Iron).

63 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1535 (Pierre Gratton, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mining Association of Canada).

witnesses also generally agreed that the permitting process for new mines is too slow, and that change is needed.

Jurisdictional Issues

Many witnesses raised concerns regarding the duplication of assessments that can arise from jurisdictional issues and the length of the permitting process.

Representatives from NRCan explained that while each province has its own permitting approval system, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada also exists at the federal level; it works closely with provincial jurisdictions to coordinate efforts. As a result, it has a substitution agreement with British Columbia, and is currently discussing creating a similar agreement with Quebec. John Mullally called this substitution agreement "a crucial starting point" in eliminating "overlap in terms of jurisdictions."[64] Kimberly Lavoie stated that the federal government "would welcome substitution agreements with all provinces."[65] She further explained that co-operation for permitting and environmental assessment between levels of government would be welcome, with the goal of "get[ting] those assessments down to under two years for all projects."[66] Lisa Riley from Vital Metals approved of this idea, saying "consolidating provincial and federal review processes makes a huge amount of sense. That would very much streamline things across the board for mining projects, definitely."[67]

Sandeep Singh discussed the complex nature of obtaining permits for mining projects in Canada, explaining that companies "face complex tripartite assessment processes involving federal, territorial and Indigenous decision-makers. Success requires proactive federal coordination to prevent delays from departmental silos, timely Crown consultation with [F]irst [N]ations, a clear focus on assessment mandates and adequate resourcing for both assessment bodies and Indigenous participation."[68] He pointed to duplication in permitting as a delay for critical minerals projects, saying "oftentimes, we find in our processes that it's not [F]irst [N]ations and the [I]ndigenous who are slowing down the

64 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1200 (John Mullally, Head of External Relations and Social Performance, Newmont Canada).

65 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1115 (Kimberly Lavoie, Assistant Deputy Minister, Nòkwewashk, Department of Natural Resources).

66 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1115 (Kimberly Lavoie, Assistant Deputy Minister, Nòkwewashk, Department of Natural Resources).

67 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1240 (Lisa Riley, CEO and Managing Director, Vital Metals).

68 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1130 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

process […] it's different organizations asking similar questions and bogging things down, or asking questions in phases that don't apply to them."[69]

Chad Ulansky agreed that eliminating duplication of permitting requirements is necessary, as "when we [submit applications for a] permit, we get the same questions from various ministries over and over again. It would be nice to have a single-window approach to our permitting to try to speed things up." He believes that repealing the *Impact Assessment Act* would increase the speed of approving projects.[70] Jeff Stibbard agreed with this last point, saying that the *Impact Assessment Act* makes the mining industry less attractive to investment, and insisting that "mineral resource development is a provincial domain and should remain so."[71] Heather Exner-Pirot believes the *Impact Assessment Act* "often added redundancy to provincial assessments and timelines" and adds to investor uncertainty.[72]

Permitting Process

Several witnesses expressed concern about the delays to project development brought on by the permitting process. Régis Simard and Chad Ulansky explained that delays with permits for projects make it challenging for Canada to stay competitive against other mining regions, such as the United States and countries in South America.[73] Chad Ulansky stated his support for responsible mining and strong environmental regulations, but clarified that "the ever-lengthening time required to obtain the permits necessary to do everything from low-level exploration right through to mine development is a real hindrance to our industry […] the credibility of the Canadian mining sector is tarnished due to the glacial pace of our permitting system."[74]

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69 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1205 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

70 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1135 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

71 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1550, 1555, 1635 (Jeff Stibbard, Executive Chairman, JDS Energy and Mining Inc.)

72 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1225 (Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, as an individual).

73 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1220 (Régis Simard, General Manager, James Bay Joint Action Mining Committee) ; RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1135 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

74 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1120 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

David Cataford told the Committee "anything that could avoid duplication of approval applications would be welcome" and suggested that advance planning and notification of requirements to obtain permits to operate in a certain region, such as the Labrador Trough, could make the process faster.[75] Mark Tory suggested that allowing for concurrent permitting, where a company could get a project underway while addressing certain outstanding permit requirements, would maintain the strength of environmental regulations and respect consultation with Indigenous communities, all while allowing projects to move forward.[76]

Sandeep Singh suggested that having fixed timelines for the permitting process would be beneficial, as it would give businesses certainty and predictability.[77] He told the Committee that when it came to obtaining mining permits, "we're not trying to or asking to make this easy. It shouldn't be easy. We're just asking for it to be a little less hard, a little bit more straightforward and a little bit more efficient."[78]

Therefore, the Committee recommends,

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada should work with provincial and territorial governments, as well as Indigenous peoples, to achieve "one project, one review" and streamline the permitting of critical mineral projects.

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada should work with provincial and territorial governments to identify priority projects in the sector.

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada eliminate red tape and ensure provincial jurisdiction is respected.

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75 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1205 (David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer, Champion Iron).

76 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1610 (Mark Tory, President and Chief Executive Officer, Defense Metals Corp.).

77 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1235 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

78 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1205 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

Recommendation 9

Fast track all mining-related projects, including those stuck in the federal regulatory queue, to ensure investor clarity and stability.

Bill C-5 and the Major Projects Office

Witnesses had mixed opinions about the Major Projects Office (MPO), proposed as part of Bill C-5, which enacted the *Building Canada Act*, and its ability to support the development of critical minerals in Canada.

David Cataford was cautiously optimistic, saying "Bill C-5 gives us hope that the time required to obtain permits will be reduced."[79] Peter Fleming stated that while the Manitoba Métis Federation supports Bill C-5, "we can't forget about the livelihood [of Métis] and our culturally significant areas."[80] Michael Gullo was more enthusiastic, telling the Committee that "we [the Business Council of Canada] do believe in Bill C-5. […] We appeared in front of the Senate to communicate our support for it."[81]

Other witnesses were skeptical towards the Major Projects Office. Heather Exner-Pirot said the MPO is "unlikely" to be the solution to lengthy permitting timelines, as in her view it will be a "bottleneck" when there are hundreds of mining projects awaiting approval in Canada.[82] She did allow that Bill C-5 identified "the main sorts of legislation that are the problem" and that she says will require reform to enable more efficient permitting processes.[83] Jeff Stibbard called the MPO "just another layer" in the permitting process.[84] He also criticized the MPO for providing support to projects that already have private funding and have secured their permits, such as the Red Chris and McIlvenna Bay projects.[85]

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79 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1205 (David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer, Champion Iron).

80 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1700 (Peter Fleming, Minister of Natural Resources, Manitoba Métis Federation).

81 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1725 (Michael Gullo, Vice President, Policy, Business Council of Canada).

82 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1225 (Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, as an individual).

83 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1230 (Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, as an individual).

84 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1620 (Jeff Stibbard, Executive Chairman, JDS Energy and Mining Inc.).

85 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1625 (Jeff Stibbard, Executive Chairman, JDS Energy and Mining Inc.).

National Chief Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak and Julie McGregor from the Assembly of First Nations criticized Bill C-5 for its approach to consulting Indigenous rights-holders. Ms. McGregor referred to being "given a very quick turnaround time in which to provide your consultation, and there aren't adequate resources to do it."[86] Sheldon Wuttunee said the *Building Canada Act* "could be received as less consultation, less accommodation and a potential erosion of the opportunities to practise our inherent and treaty rights."[87] He also questioned whether the MPO would or could provide capacity support to First Nations so they might better understand the projects the MPO will approve.[88]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada increase transparency and ensure regular reporting for projects designated as projects of national interest through the Special Joint Committee on the Exercise of Powers Under the *Building Canada Act*.

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada consider critical mineral projects across the country in its efforts to advance nation-building projects under the *Building Canada Act*.

Extraction and Processing of Rare Earth Elements

Several witnesses informed the Committee that the complexity of extracting rare earth elements is a barrier to the development of this particular group of critical minerals. They explained that further investment and efforts in research and development in extraction technology are necessary for Canada to become successful in producing rare earth elements at a commercial scale.[89] A.E. Williams-Jones stated that due to Canada's lack of experience with extracting rare earth elements such as niobium, "that only 59% of that niobium [in a deposit] is being recovered, while 40% is actually going into

86 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1135 (Julie McGregor, Acting Chief of Staff, Assembly of First Nations).

87 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1150 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

88 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1155 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

89 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1650, 1720 (A.E. Williams-Jones, Logan Professor of Geology and Geochemistry, McGill University), RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1135 (Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector, Department of Natural Resources), RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1230 (Francis Fournier, President and CEO, Corem).

waste."[90] To date, the technology related to extracting rare earth elements is "largely controlled or developed by China," while new developments are happening in Germany and other parts of Europe, according to Francis Fournier, who concluded Canada needs to work quickly on research and development in this area.[91]

Additionally, Mark Tory explained that Canada does not currently have a rare earth elements processing system, and that while the country has the ability to build the necessary hydrometallurgical facilities, it is lacking "the experience to be able to run them." He pointed to China, saying that country "has done a great job in making sure they have all of the universities developing and producing chemical engineers who are able to run hydrometallurgical plants and separation plants," and emphasized that Canada needs to immediately build the facilities that industry will require "in five, seven and 10 years' time."[92] Isabella Chan agreed that support is required for the whole rare earth elements value chain, from extraction to separation to final products such as permanent magnets.[93]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada invest in rare earth separation technology and develop a domestic mine-to-magnet strategy.

Infrastructure

Many witnesses named a lack of infrastructure as an important barrier to the development of critical minerals in Canada; as Chad Ulansky put it, "without infrastructure, they can't be developed."[94] He stated his belief that "new significant tier one discoveries are going to be made" in previously undeveloped or underdeveloped areas of Canada, and that companies are "going to need to have some guarantee that we'll be able to get some infrastructure built to [mineral deposits] so that we can bring

90 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1650 (A.E. Williams-Jones, Logan Professor of Geology and Geochemistry, McGill University).

91 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1230 (Francis Fournier, President and CEO, Corem).

92 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1615 (Mark Tory, President and Chief Executive Officer, Defense Metals Corp.).

93 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1135 (Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector, Department of Natural Resources).

94 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1120 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

them to market."[95] Jeff Stibbard echoed this view, saying "vast resources are shut in due to lack of infrastructure" and listed energy, roads, railways, ports, and "purpose-built communities" as "required for the industry."[96] A.E. Williams-Jones said that accessing critical minerals has "two initial problems: energy and transportation."[97]

Cindy Valence described the efforts of mining project leaders in northern Quebec asking federal and provincial governments for support in building infrastructure that would benefit all parties involved in resource development, as well as creating "community vitality." She explained that the Commerce Resources Corp. (now Mont Royal) project in Nunavik cannot "single-handedly support all the infrastructure needed to develop northern Quebec," adding that while co-operation is important, it is also "complicated." She pointed out that "whatever infrastructure is developed, it will benefit everyone."[98] Similarly, Sandeep Singh stated that despite the Yukon's "exceptional geological potential," with 27 of 34 critical minerals present in the territory, the area is "vastly underexplored" due to a lack of infrastructure. He suggested "the solution is dual-use infrastructure that serves both industry and communities."[99] Robin Goad echoed the "importance of infrastructure development, particularly in Canada's north, […] where 45% of GDP comes from the resource industry."[100]

David Cataford emphasized the need to build energy transmission lines and expand capacity at the Port of Sept-Îles to support the development of high-purity iron ore in the Labrador Trough. These infrastructure developments would support his company's Kami project and allow it to benefit from partnerships with two Japanese steel firms.[101]

A. E. Williams-Jones suggested that a solution to concerns about infrastructure would be to increase mineral exploration around major centres. He cited as an example the Lackner Lake project, located 100km away from Timmins, Ontario; he described it as "sitting in a

95 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1225 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

96 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1545 (Jeff Stibbard, Executive Chairman, JDS Energy and Mining Inc.).

97 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1720 (A.E. Williams-Jones, Logan Professor of Geology and Geochemistry, McGill University).

98 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1230 (Cindy Valence, Vice President, Sustainability and Government Affairs, Commerce Resources Corp.).

99 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1125 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

100 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1600 (Robin Goad, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fortune Minerals Limited).

101 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1110 (David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer, Champion Iron).

major mining district" and said that thanks to its location, it has "no infrastructure issues there at all."[102] He also explained that many critical mineral deposits are actually close to major centres, "but they've suffered from a lack of exploration."

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada should provide funding to develop needed infrastructure, such as roads, electricity transmission, etc. that unlock critical mineral projects across Canada and especially in remote regions.

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada should support increased capacity for the transportation and export of critical minerals in Canada.

Recommendation 15

That the Government of Canada should advance the First and Last Mile Fund to support the infrastructure Canada needs to develop critical minerals.

Recommendation 16

That the Government of Canada ensure adequate mining-related infrastructure is fast-tracked and supported.

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada ensure Canada's mining sector's growing energy needs are met with reliable, affordable energy supplies and infrastructure.

Barriers to Indigenous Participation in the Critical Minerals Sector

There are several barriers to full participation in the critical mineral development sector that are unique to Indigenous communities.[103]

102 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1610, 1735 (A.E. Williams-Jones, Logan Professor of Geology and Geochemistry, McGill University).

103 During this study, the Committee heard from First Nations and Métis organizations. Representatives from Inuit organizations were unable to present to the Committee, and did not submit written briefs.

National Chief Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak provided the Committee with a summary of the situation facing First Nations communities becoming involved in critical minerals development. In addition to the common challenges of accessing capital and "navigating complex permitting processes," she explained that First Nations communities face the additional challenges of lacking capacity to participate in assessments and studies throughout a project life cycle, and have "a general distrust of industry stemming from negative experience, including limited transparency and insufficient early engagement." These barriers are all compounded by a lack of basic infrastructure in communities, "such as roads, energy and broadband [internet access]."[104]

Financing and Equity

While many witnesses expressed gratitude for the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program, they also criticized certain weaknesses in the program. Lisa Riley explained that "it's not a vehicle that works for mining companies at a certain level" because it is designed for "a much lower-risk profile of investment." The four First Nations on whose land her project is located "would like to be investors, and they'd like to use that Indigenous loan guarantee, but they can't in the way it's structured right now for an investment in this project."[105] National Chief Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak criticized the program for being "fundamentally not designed to address community infrastructure needs, the fundamental barrier to economic inclusion and self-determination."[106] Sharleen Gale recognized that "the Indigenous loan guarantee has a low-risk mandate geared to supporting operational or near-operational projects, and this mandate will need to change to support projects going forward, especially critical minerals projects."[107] Shaun Fantauzzo echoed this view, explaining that the loan guarantee program had been "designed for traditional energy or linear infrastructure projects" when the realities of the critical minerals sector are different; he concluded "those tools will need to change and the deals will need to change to adapt."[108]

104 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1120 (Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations).

105 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1240 (Lisa Riley, CEO and Managing Director, Vital Metals).

106 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1105 (Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations).

107 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1225 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

108 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1225 (Shaun Fantauzzo, Vice-President of Policy, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 18

The Government of Canada should advance opportunities for Indigenous co-ownership and participation in critical mineral projects, including by adapting and delivering the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program.

Duty to Consult – Is it Respected?

Sheldon Wuttunee explained that the consultation process with First Nations can be hampered by a lack of information provided to communities, saying "I think many of our nations are caught off guard in many respects" which can be problematic when facing "deadlines in terms of [F]irst [N]ations' responses to a project or to aspects of a project."[109] He also described a lack of communication from organizations like the Impact Assessment Agency or the Canada Energy Regulator regarding concerns shared by First Nations, explaining that "we don't necessarily understand where that information goes, how it's deliberated on or how decisions are made based on the assertions of [F]irst [N]ations."[110]

Sheldon Wuttunee also stressed the importance in his view of consultation mechanisms being developed by Indigenous communities and not imposed by municipal, provincial or federal governments.[111]

Other witnesses also shared their views that consultation with Indigenous rights-holders be meaningful and based on trust. Meg Gingrich stated that "development can only move quickly if it also moves responsibly, with full respect for Indigenous rights and participation in decision-making. Meaningful consultation and benefit sharing through mechanisms like impact and benefit agreements are essential to ensuring projects earn local support and deliver shared prosperity."[112] Chad Ulansky described his concerns about an "at times, strained relationship with the [F]irst [N]ations" and stated his view that "both government and industry need to ensure that we have an open and

109 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1130 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

110 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1135 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

111 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1120 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

112 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1215 (Meg Gingrich, Assistant to the National Director, United Steelworkers Union).

trustworthy relationship with [F]irst [N]ations and are able to offer them a real interest in having resources developed in their traditional territories."[113]

Capacity-Building

Although Indigenous communities expect to be properly consulted regarding the possible development of mining projects on or near their lands, witnesses described the lack of capacity many communities have to fully engage in the process. Julie McGregor from the Assembly of First Nations explained that "the lifespan of a project can have several regulatory processes that [F]irst [N]ations just don't have the capacity to meaningfully participate in, even though that's the law" and added that "often, it's left to industry to provide that support."[114] Sheldon Wuttunee emphasized the need for "appropriate capacity and funding provided to [F]irst [N]ations to meaningfully understand what a project is and how it can potentially impact our rights, those being inherent rights and treaty rights as well."[115] Speaking from the mining industry perspective, Sandeep Singh said he would like to see "increased emphasis on the federal government's responsibility to consult with [F]irst [N]ations. It's doing that earlier in the process and making sure those [F]irst [N]ations are funded."[116]

Sheldon Wuttunee presented his organization, the Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence, as a solution to supporting First Nations in their capacity to engage in the development consultation process. He explained that "nations don't often have the capacity to be able to respond to duty to consult trigger letters or to better understand from a scientific or technical perspective what the project is and how it's going to impact them," and said that being able to provide capacity support is key to their full participation in the process.[117]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

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113 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1120 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

114 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1130 (Julie McGregor, Acting Chief of Staff, Assembly of First Nations).

115 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1120 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

116 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1245 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

117 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1120 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

Recommendation 19

That the Government of Canada foster multilateral collaboration and strengthen Indigenous capacity.

The Infrastructure Gap

Witnesses recognized the potential for critical minerals projects to generate revenue for corporations and governments, but emphasized that improvements to infrastructure serving Indigenous communities should increase accordingly. Benjamin Green-Stacey from the Assembly of First Nations reminded the Committee that "for [F]irst [N]ations communities, the reality day to day is that there might not be access to high-speed Internet, there might not be access to clean drinking water" despite successful mining projects operating nearby.[118] National Chief Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak said closing the infrastructure gap is "the key to supporting [F]irst [N]ations in the participation of emerging critical mining systems," while Sharleen Gale said infrastructure and social services investments "are not separate from economic development; they are the preconditions for it."[119]

National Chief Woodhouse-Nepinak and Ms. Gale are also proponents of dual-use infrastructure, echoing previous comments by witnesses from the mining industry. They explained that "there are a variety of economic and social co-benefits that come from federal economic investments in related infrastructure"[120] and that "infrastructure must be codesigned with [F]irst [N]ations from the onset to serve both the economic and the community purpose."[121]

John Mullally stated that Newmont Corporation believes that "as we operate and grow in a region the surrounding communities should also benefit." He explained that "the Tahltan communities of Iskut, Telegraph Creek and Dease Lake continue to have substandard outcomes in health and education and in their roads, stores, clinics and

118 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1120 (Benjamin Green-Stacey, Assembly of First Nations).

119 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1235 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition); RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1145 (Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations).

120 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1145 (Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations).

121 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1230 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

other things" and that as the company's Red Chris mine operates "we'll need to really consider how we continue to increase the standard of living in these communities."[122]

Meg Gingrich pointed out that investment in communities near mining projects also benefits workers; she noted that "That's something we hear from our members when new mines open up: they don't necessarily want to move to a new community if they don't have essential services, schools and things like that."[123]

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CRITICAL MINERALS SECTOR

Most witnesses told the Committee that despite challenges and barriers, they see several opportunities for Canada related to the development of critical minerals. Sandeep Singh provided a summary of these opportunities, saying "critical minerals development can serve multiple national priorities: provide substantial economic benefits, strengthen domestic supply chains, justify infrastructure investments and bolster Arctic sovereignty."[124]

Infrastructure

Addressing infrastructure gaps presents the opportunity to design and build multi-use infrastructure. Representatives from Arianne Phosphate explained the importance of the infrastructure they are building for their project in the Saguenay region of Quebec, as the Department of National Defence, Hydro-Québec, and the forestry industry will all benefit, while Arianne Phosphate is solely responsible for infrastructure cost and maintenance.[125] Jeff Stibbard also saw "opportunities to improve our resource production business" through "co-operative trans-provincial infrastructure; and public-private development in the likes of co-development of necessary mining infrastructure."[126]

David Cataford explained that investments in infrastructure will allow for governments to generate taxes and revenue in future. He gave the example of the Quebec government making infrastructure investments that benefitted Champion Iron's project in the Labrador

122 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1245 (John Mullally, Head of External Relations and Social Performance, Newmont Canada).

123 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1250 (Meg Gingrich, Assistant to the National Director, United Steelworkers Union).

124 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1125 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

125 Meeting with representatives from Arianne Phosphate, 12 November 2025, Saguenay.

126 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1550 (Jeff Stibbard, Executive Chairman, JDS Energy and Mining Inc.).

Trough; the province was later able to "make a significant return on equity on the mining side, […] and generated close to a billion dollars in taxes and revenue."[127] Chad Ulansky told the Committee that investments in mining projects generally create "a real opportunity to dramatically stimulate the Canadian economy for the whole public's good."[128]

Sandeep Singh pointed out that a good proportion of infrastructure in northern Canada "stems from previous mining operations" that now benefit communities more broadly, while also being "a benefit from an Arctic sovereignty perspective." He called taking steps to build upon those prior investments in infrastructure "the best things we could be doing for ourselves as Canadians."[129]

Geopolitical Shifts

China's dominance in several critical mineral supply chains is a cause for concern, according to several witnesses, but it also provides Canada with an opportunity to provide allied countries with an alternate supply. Jeff Gaulin suggested "that Canada should aggressively pursue North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) defence and adjacent infrastructure spending in exchange for preferential, long-term, secure and reliable access to critical minerals at a premium." He also stated that Canada's role as 2025 President of the G7 may give the opportunity to expand its market reach to Germany and other EU countries currently relying on minerals from Russia that are refined in China.[130] Heather Exner-Pirot supported this view, and specified that Canada's focus should be on exporting minerals that are "on either the NATO defence materials list or China's export restriction list […] very quickly and urgently."[131] She listed germanium, gallium, antimony and tungsten, along with some rare earth elements, as top priorities for Canada to develop to supply allied countries' defence requirements.[132] Michael Gullo suggested that Canada's experience in mining, governance and global markets makes it "an important supplier to its NATO allies" and recommended that the Canadian government and private sector work

127 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1145 (David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer, Champion Iron).

128 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1155 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

129 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1150 (Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Western Copper and Gold).

130 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1545 (Jeff Gaulin, Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Vale Base Metals Canada).

131 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1300 (Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, as an individual).

132 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1300 (Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, as an individual).

together to "create a critical mineral reserve for niche metals vital to defence purposes."[133]

Currently, lithium for battery anodes is completely sourced in China, according to Eric Desaulniers. He expressed optimism that Canada can seize the opportunity to "play a leading role" in providing lithium to G7 countries, thus allowing them to eliminate China as a provider. To do so, Canada will need to "propos[e] mining projects that are ready for construction and financing, […] use the necessary tools to mitigate the risks involved in financing these projects and then start the construction."[134]

Lisa Riley emphasized the importance of acting fast to take advantage of geopolitical shifts. She stated "rare earths are an essential opportunity for Canada to have a seat at the global table, where we would produce a lot more than we would use. We need to take this opportunity. The market is just starting to turn now. […] There's a time and a place for everything, and rare earths are today."[135]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 20

That the Government of Canada expand coordination with Canadian allies to supply critical minerals and added value components for Canadian security and global supply chains.

Recommendation 21

The Government of Canada should support the responsible development of critical minerals as key contributors to Canada's economic strength and national security.

A Canadian Value Chain

Several witnesses stressed the importance of keeping as much of the critical minerals value chain in Canada as possible, either by protecting existing processing facilities, or building processing and manufacturing sites. According to Meg Gingrich, "a real critical minerals industrial strategy must build an integrated value chain from exploration, refining, processing and manufacturing to recycling, so the jobs and wealth remain in

133 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1645 (Michael Gullo, Vice President, Policy, Business Council of Canada).

134 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1730, 1735 (Eric Desaulniers, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer, Nouveau Monde Graphite).

135 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1225 (Lisa Riley, CEO and Managing Director, Vital Metals).

Canada."[136] She explained that "the energy transition, our manufacturing base and our national security all depend" on Canada being able to process minerals in addition to extracting them.[137] Robin Goad told the Committee "if we don't process our minerals here in Canada, then they're lost. In simply producing concentrates and shipping those to Asia […] those metals are not available for our industry here in Canada, which is really the most important thing we're trying to achieve."[138]

While visiting Sudbury, members of the Committee heard about the need to protect smelting and refining facilities in Canada. Glencore representatives in Sudbury explained that Canada's focus has been on new mining projects, not keeping smelters and refineries operational. This gap is a threat we're not seeing, they said, as it may prevent Canada from processing and manufacturing independently of other nations.[139] Daniel Alessi spoke of the opportunity Canada has "to build vertical domestic production chains," and gave the example of low-grade lithium-bearing sedimentary brines found in western Canada. He explained "we could take those low-grade brines all the way to high-grade lithium salts and, if we let ourselves dream a little, could maybe even manufacture lithium-ion batteries in Canada, producing far more economic value than simply exporting a raw ore."[140]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 22

That the Government of Canada develop an approach that encourages manufacturers to source raw materials and processed materials in Canada.

Recommendation 23

That the Government of Canada develop local processing and refining capacity to reduce reliance on imports, while prioritizing sourcing from allied nations when imports are necessary.

136 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1215 (Meg Gingrich, Assistant to the National Director, United Steelworkers Union).

137 Ibid.

138 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1555 (Robin Goad, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fortune Minerals Limited).

139 Meeting with Glencore representatives, 15 November 2025, Sudbury.

140 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1710 (Daniel Alessi, Professor, University of Alberta).

Partnerships: The Consortium Model

During its first meeting on critical minerals development, the Committee heard from representatives of a consortium focused on developing a Canadian rare earth element supply chain. Consortium members from the mining industry currently include Vital Metals, Commerce Resources (now known as Mont Royal), Defense Metals, and Appia Resources. Additional partners include Corem, to support process innovation, and March Consulting, as engineering consultants. Consortium member Lisa Riley explained that "because rare earths are some of the most complex elements to extract, process and separate, […] we decided we would benefit from working together to come up with the most efficient green way to build a Canadian rare earth supply chain."[141] By combining its members' experience with the "extraction, concentration, […] separation and purification" of mineral deposits, the consortium plans to develop a whole value chain ending in the production of permanent magnets.[142]

Cindy Valence told the Committee that by developing a "coordinated technical plan," the consortium will "be able to reduce costs and risks, thereby strengthening our strategic position in the global market for critical minerals."[143] The idea to collaborate came about in order "to prevent each company from developing its project in parallel […] allow[ing] us to reduce risks, and share costs and benefits,"[144] explained Francis Fournier of Corem. He also explained that consortium members believe "it's better to rely on co-operation, which will obviously make it possible to move forward more quickly."[145] When asked how much time the consortium model would save in process development, Lisa Riley replied "I believe it would be a minimum of five years."[146]

While the consortium model has its advantages, witnesses said that obtaining funding for such a model has been complicated. Cindy Valence explained that "everyone with rare earth projects will have to conduct studies on processes, so we're all going to be knocking on the same doors again to get the same money from the same envelope […] that's why we've approached the various departments to see if there's a way to create a portfolio dedicated to the consortium to encompass all innovation, research and

141 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1200 (Lisa Riley, CEO and Managing Director, Vital Metals).

142 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1215 (Francis Fournier, President and CEO, Corem).

143 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1205 (Cindy Valence, Vice President, Sustainability and Government Affairs, Commerce Resources Corp.).

144 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1215 (Francis Fournier, President and CEO, Corem).

145 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1245 (Francis Fournier, President and CEO, Corem).

146 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1235 (Lisa Riley, CEO and Managing Director, Vital Metals).

development with the pilot testing. That would then enable us to get together and be able to move forward."[147]

Energy Transition and Decarbonization

Witnesses told the Committee that developing critical minerals will allow Canada to support the global energy transition and improve the carbon footprint of certain industries.

Sharleen Gale told the Committee that due to the global demand for electric vehicles, batteries and renewable power, "the International Energy Agency projects that global demand for nickel, cobalt and lithium will quintuple by 2040." She stated that "Canada has what the world needs. Our resources are valued at more than $350 billion […] Developing them responsibly is a matter of jurisdiction, partnership and shared prosperity."[148]

Eric Desaulniers told the Committee that electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming more popular, accounting for more than 20% of vehicles sold in Europe, and more than 50% of passenger cars sold in China. He acknowledged that the United States is not moving in this direction, but added "this is seen as very temporary, because the rest of the world is going to EV and battery storage."[149] He explained that the growth in the electric vehicle and battery energy storage system markets, both of which use lithium ion batteries containing graphite, justify the expansion of Canada's graphite production, with his company now "building a 100,000-tonne mine" to respond to demand.[150]

Phosphate is another critical mineral used in batteries, specifically in lithium-iron-phosphate batteries (LFP) that are deployed in EVs and energy storage systems. Arianne Phosphate and First Phosphate, both based in the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region of Quebec, aim to become producers and refiners of Canadian phosphate. Arianne Phosphate noted in a written brief submitted to the Committee that there are presently no producing phosphate mines in Canada, thus making the country fully dependent on foreign imports; the company aims to change this situation with the development of its

147 RNNR, *Evidence*, 25 September 2025, 1235 (Cindy Valence, Vice President, Sustainability and Government Affairs, Commerce Resources Corp.).

148 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1210 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

149 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1710 (Eric Desaulniers, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer, Nouveau Monde Graphite).

150 Ibid.

Lac à Paul mining project.[151] First Phosphate aims to create a mine-to-market supply chain for LFP batteries in North America, based on its Bégin-Lamarche mining project in Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and a proposed phosphoric acid plant at the Port of Saguenay.[152]

High-purity iron, listed as a critical mineral in Canada, is of utmost importance to lowering the carbon emissions of the steelmaking process. David Cataford explained that using "an extra-pure material like we have here in the ground in Canada" as the basis for steelmaking will reduce CO2 emissions by "between 10% and 20%" using traditional blast furnace technology, and by 50% using an electric arc furnace.[153]

Economic Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Several witnesses told the Committee that developing critical minerals offers the opportunity for economic reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous rights-holders, as Indigenous communities can benefit from full participation in the industry. Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, provided the Committee with a definition of economic reconciliation, saying it "means that policies and programs must enable [F]irst [N]ations to fully participate not just as stakeholders but also as rights holders, equity partners and co-developers."[154]

Sharleen Gale informed the Committee that First Nations involvement in mining and minerals has always been part of their "sophisticated traditional economies," giving the example of "shield-shaped coppers, a symbol of wealth and identity that speaks to an enduring relationship with the land" made by the Tlingit nation since before European contact. However, she warned that mining benefits have "too often bypassed our communities" in modern times, and that "meaningful partnerships" that prevent imbalance must be made between mining companies and First Nations communities.[155]

Sheldon Wuttunee described his view that balance must be achieved as part of economic reconciliation. He recognized the opportunities that can come from

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151 Ariane Phosphate Inc., *The importance of the phosphate sector in Canada's Critical Minerals Strategy and the actions needed to ensure its success*, written brief, 28 August 2025, p. 1.

152 First Phosphate Corp., *Brief Submitted to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Commons*, written brief, 12 November 2025, p. 1–2.

153 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1140 (David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer, Champion Iron).

154 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1105 (Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations).

155 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1210 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

developing resources, such as “equity opportunities within some of the major projects, within supply chain and procurement and within workforce development,” while also acknowledging the importance of ensuring “that our lands, territories and waters are protected for future generations with respect to traditional and cultural ways of life.”[156] Sharleen Gale echoed this view when she described needing to consider seven generations in the past and in the future in decision-making, and said “there’s so much that we look forward to in owning these [critical minerals] projects,” giving the examples of community employment and involvement at the board and management levels.[157]

On the industry side, Eric Desaulniers spoke of the importance of having “something you can offer the community so that it can enjoy tangible benefits from the project, not just watch from the sidelines.”[158] Economic reconciliation begins at the very start of a potential project, according to Paul Blom, who said that the “recipe for a successful project” is “when exploration companies partner with the [F]irst [N]ation on whose territory they're exploring.”[159] Chad Ulansky explained that “having [F]irst [N]ations as a partner in resources is critical. I think we are all increasingly understanding the importance of having them at the table in a meaningful role.”[160] Sharleen Gale emphasized that “Indigenous partnership is not a barrier; it is Canada's strategic advantage that needs to be nurtured and supported through real investment in capacity. […] When Indigenous rights and ownership are embedded from the beginning, projects will move faster, you'll face fewer disputes and you'll generate shared prosperity for all Canadians.”[161]

Some witnesses gave examples of economic reconciliation in action. Mark Tory explained that in 2024, the McLeod Lake Indian Band became an equity partner in Defense Metals, acquiring 2.6 million shares in the company. He called the agreement “a real and growing partnership and a model for economic reconciliation.”[162] John Mullally

156 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1110 (Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence).

157 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1245, 1250 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

158 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1630 (Eric Desaulniers, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer, Nouveau Monde Graphite).

159 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1235 (Paul Blom, Chief Operating Officer, BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council).

160 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1245 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.).

161 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1245, 1300 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

162 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1540 (Mark Tory, President and Chief Executive Officer, Defense Metals Corp.).

stated that "the Tahltan and Nisga'a nations bring stewardship of the land, business acumen and vision" in their partnership with Newmont Canada at the Red Chris mine. Part of that partnership, he explained, is the Tahltan Nation Development Corporation accounting for more than one-sixth of Newmont's annual supplier spending, with over $100 million going to the Corporation each year.[163]

Sharleen Gale described the long-term potential that comes from efforts at economic reconciliation: "If we get this right, critical minerals can be a part of a new era of economic reconciliation in which [F]irst [N]ations are owners, project proponents, business leaders and decision-makers in how minerals are developed and recycled."[164]

During meetings with Vale and Glencore representatives in Sudbury, Committee members heard of both companies' close ties and working partnerships with Indigenous groups. Vale representatives explained that all subcontractors working on the company's Stobie Open Pit mine are Indigenous. Glencore presented their partnership agreements with four Indigenous organizations, including the Wahnapitae First Nation, which partners on monitoring environmental levels of sulphur dioxide resulting from the company's smelter.[165]

Policy Suggestions

Government Funding and Supports

Witnesses described several ways the federal government might support the critical minerals industry through policy and programs. Michael Gullo listed "a number of tools that are available, ranging from infrastructure funds to loan guarantees, investment tax incentives, price floors, equity positions and offtake agreements" as ways of supporting the industry.[166] Several documents submitted to the Committee also advocated for these policy tools to support the critical minerals sector.[167]

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163 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1115 (John Mullally, Head of External Relations and Social Performance, Newmont Canada).

164 RNNR, *Evidence*, 9 October 2025, 1210 (Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors, First Nations Major Projects Coalition).

165 Meetings with Vale and Glencore representatives, 15 November 2025, Sudbury.

166 RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1730 (Michael Gullo, Vice President, Policy, Business Council of Canada).

167 See for example Canadian Forum for Financial Markets, 20 November 2025; Fortune Minerals Limited, 20 October 2025; The Mining Association of Canada, 27 October 2025.

Chad Ulansky and Richard Dunn both mentioned Canada's flow-through shares program as an essential support to junior mining companies. Richard Dunn further specified that helium companies are "struggling to secure the funding needed" because they do not currently have access to flow-through shares, and advocated for the program to be expanded to include helium.[168]

Robin Goad told the committee he sees "a role for government" in helping industry face the challenges brought by China manipulating the price of certain metals.[169] Mark Tory suggested that "price floors, as are being contemplated, are a good policy" that will help protect Canada's industry against unfair practices from China. He explained that price floors "would improve project economics, helping the full investment decision, and attract external investment."[170]

Witnesses also encouraged the federal government to be careful in designing subsidy and procurement rules. Robin Goad asserted that "we've given tremendous subsidies to the battery industry, and there was no requirement for domestically sourced raw materials to be used with those subsidies. I would argue that could have been easily done."[171] Meg Gingrich told the Committee that the government must ensure "new federal programs and Canadian procurement rules are tied to real domestic benefits, not loopholes that allow imports to replace Canadian production."[172]

During their meetings in Saguenay, Committee members heard that minerals like phosphate, lithium and rare earth elements do not benefit from the predictable, established prices that base metals do, which is a challenge. Mining industry representatives indicated that phosphate, for example, has no established price and is agreed upon between each individual buyer and producer. These representatives discussed the idea of a critical minerals stockpile or reserve that would guarantee a

168 RNNR, *Evidence*, 2 October 2025, 1245 (Chad Ulansky, President and CEO, Cantex Mine Development Corp.); RNNR, *Evidence*, 27 October 2025, 1530 (Richard Dunn, Executive Director, Helium Developers Association of Canada).

169 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1600 (Robin Goad, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fortune Minerals Limited).

170 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1540 (Mark Tory, President and Chief Executive Officer, Defense Metals Corp.).

171 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1630 (Robin Goad, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fortune Minerals Limited).

172 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1215 (Meg Gingrich, Assistant to the National Director, United Steelworkers Union).

certain amount of production and a predictable client base – such as NATO countries, for example.[173]

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 24

That the Government of Canada take comprehensive steps to strengthen private sector mineral processing and refining capacity within Canada, to capture the full economic value of domestically produced minerals in Canada rather than export it abroad.

Recommendation 25

That the Government of Canada support critical mineral development by advancing offtake agreements and stockpiling through the *Defence Production Act* to protect critical mineral projects from market manipulation.

Recommendation 26

That the Government of Canada establish price floors for critical mineral projects to counter unfair price manipulation on global markets.

Recommendation 27

That the Government of Canada advance the Critical Minerals Sovereign Fund to support the development of critical minerals.

Recommendation 28

That the Government of Canada include technical studies and certain administrative costs in mining operations eligible for flow-through shares and that the Government of Canada extend the existing tax credit and flow-through share regime for mineral exploration in such a way that unspent funds in a given year, and associated tax credits, can be rolled over into the following year.

Distinctions Between Minerals

Heather Exner-Pirot said that while the term 'critical minerals' is helpful for public messaging, it is an "umbrella term" that is "bad for policy nuance." Instead, she

173 Meeting with mining industry experts and representatives, 12 November 2025, Saguenay.

advocated for dividing minerals into four separate categories, due to their requirement for different strategic and policy responses. She suggested the first category could be those in which Canada is already dominant, such as potash and uranium; the second would be for minerals like gold, copper and nickel that drive GDP growth; the third would be minerals that can expect future growth due to technology or market structures, such as lithium and graphite; and the fourth would be minerals whose markets are currently weak, but whose supply security is essential, like gallium, germanium, and rare earth elements. She encouraged the federal government to reflect on "the financial tools the state can use to develop supply in these commodities by ourselves and with our allies."[174] In a reference document submitted to the Committee, the Canadian Forum for Financial Markets suggested that rare earth elements require a separate strategy from other critical minerals, due to the particular challenges associated with extraction and processing of these elements, and to encourage private investment while global demand for rare earth elements is strong.[175]

THE "CORRIDOR DU NORD" PROPOSAL

The "Corridor du Nord" is a proposal to create a transportation infrastructure corridor that would link the Ring of Fire minerals region in northern Ontario with the Port of Saguenay in Quebec. Proponents of the project include the reeves of five municipalities in the Saguenay—Lac-St-Jean region of Quebec, the Port of Saguenay, Promotion Saguenay, reeves of municipalities in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, mayors in northern Ontario, as well as the Cree nation as represented by La Grande Alliance.[176] The proposed "Corridor du Nord" project would connect the dots by optimizing existing infrastructure, officials from the Saguenay Port Authority told Committee members during their visit to the port.[177] Witnesses told the Committee about the project's potential, its importance to the Saguenay region and Canada as a whole, the partnerships and infrastructure development that could result from the project, and the barriers that could prevent its success.

Carl Laberge of the Saguenay Port Authority explained to the Committee that the port is currently linked to a rail network running to the northern edge of the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, which connects to the Chibougamau-Chapais region, "home to

174 RNNR, *Evidence*, 23 October 2025, 1210 (Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, as an individual).

175 Canadian Forum for Financial Markets, reference document, submitted 20 November 2025, pp. 6, 17.

176 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1705 (Louis Ouellet, President, Union des Préfets-Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean).

177 Meeting with representatives from Saguenay Port Authority, 12 November 2025, Saguenay.

a number of mining projects in development—especially in the critical and strategic minerals sector."[178] Restoring a former rail line between Grevet and Chapais "would make connecting Abitibi, the Chibougamau area and the Port of Saguenay a real possibility in the future," he stated. In the Saguenay region itself, there are two phosphate companies currently planning processing plants, as well as copper and lithium projects underway. Carl Laberge says the Port of Saguenay's plan is to "invest in infrastructure," both in preparation for these projects, and also in the hope of "encourag[ing] private sector investment by offering good infrastructure both in terms of transportation and in terms of industrial facilities."[179] According to Mr. Laberge, the port can accommodate critical minerals processing in future because of its 1,200 hectares of open industrial land ready for development, and is "very well equipped, rail-wise and marine-wise, for the transshipment of mining cargo."[180]

The proposed corridor's timing is of the essence, said Louis Ouellet, given the tariffs brought by the United States on products like aluminum. He explained that since the tariffs have come about, the rail portion of the "Corridor du Nord" "has become essential, in our opinion—so that critical minerals from Quebec and the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario can reach the ocean and eastern Canada." He outlined the long-term benefits of connecting northern Ontario to Saguenay's deepwater port, allowing industry to avoid the increasing transportation costs linked to low water levels in the St. Lawrence River, and emphasized that the project has public support. Mr. Ouellet concluded "now we have to complete this project, which, in my opinion, is necessary not only for our territory's economy, but also for Canada's."[181]

While the "Corridor du Nord" has potential and support from many stakeholders, it faces a few challenges. One is that a key portion of the proposed corridor's rail line is in need of repair and owned by Canadian National Railway Company (CN), whose representative Kelly Levis told the Committee that "at present, it would be very difficult for us to invest capital in this rehabilitation [of the rail line] without guaranteed traffic volumes. Financing would therefore need to come from other sources."[182] Ms. Levis did state CN's positive

178 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1615 (Carl Laberge, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saguenay Port Authority).

179 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1640 (Carl Laberge, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saguenay Port Authority).

180 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1615 (Carl Laberge, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saguenay Port Authority).

181 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1705, 1715 (Louis Ouellet, President, Union des Préfets-Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean).

182 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1725 (Kelly Levis, Vice-President, Industrial Products, Canadian National Railway Company).

view of the project, since it has potential to increase traffic on their rail network, but repeated that the company is studying whether the trade volumes generated "will be sufficient to justify our investment in the development of the railroad."[183]

Another section of railway that would form part of the proposed "Corridor du Nord" is owned by mining company Rio Tinto. In their meeting with Committee members in Saguenay, the company's local representatives stated they are open to collaborating on regional development projects such as the "Corridor du Nord", with a few conditions. In order to give its support, Rio Tinto must find that regional development projects are in keeping with its existing activities and plans for growth, meet its own safety, environmental and social standards, and allow for the undisturbed continuity of Rio Tinto's aluminum supply chain.[184]

Additionally, Carl Laberge explained that it "is hard to find a single private investor who will take on a project of national scope" such as the "Corridor du Nord". He concluded that the project would require several private investors working together, with government playing "a unifying role to ensure that a corridor as strategic as this one can be created, organized and funded. There is a certain level of risk associated with this project, and it will require a more complex financial structure than if there were only a single investor."[185] Louis Ouellet explained that for the "Corridor du Nord" to be successful, a project office must be opened to coordinate with potential clients and ensure full agreement from communities along the whole of the corridor. Then, he said, "we'll be able to present the government with a turnkey project and tell them that this is the best project they could have."[186]

Therefore, the Committee recommends,

Recommendation 29

That the Government of Canada invest in federal rail and port infrastructure to facilitate transporting and exporting critical minerals.

183 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1740 (Kelly Levis, Vice-President, Industrial Products, Canadian National Railway Company).

184 Meeting with Rio Tinto representatives, 12 November 2025, Saguenay.

185 RNNR, *Evidence*, 6 October 2025, 1640 (Carl Laberge, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saguenay Port Authority).

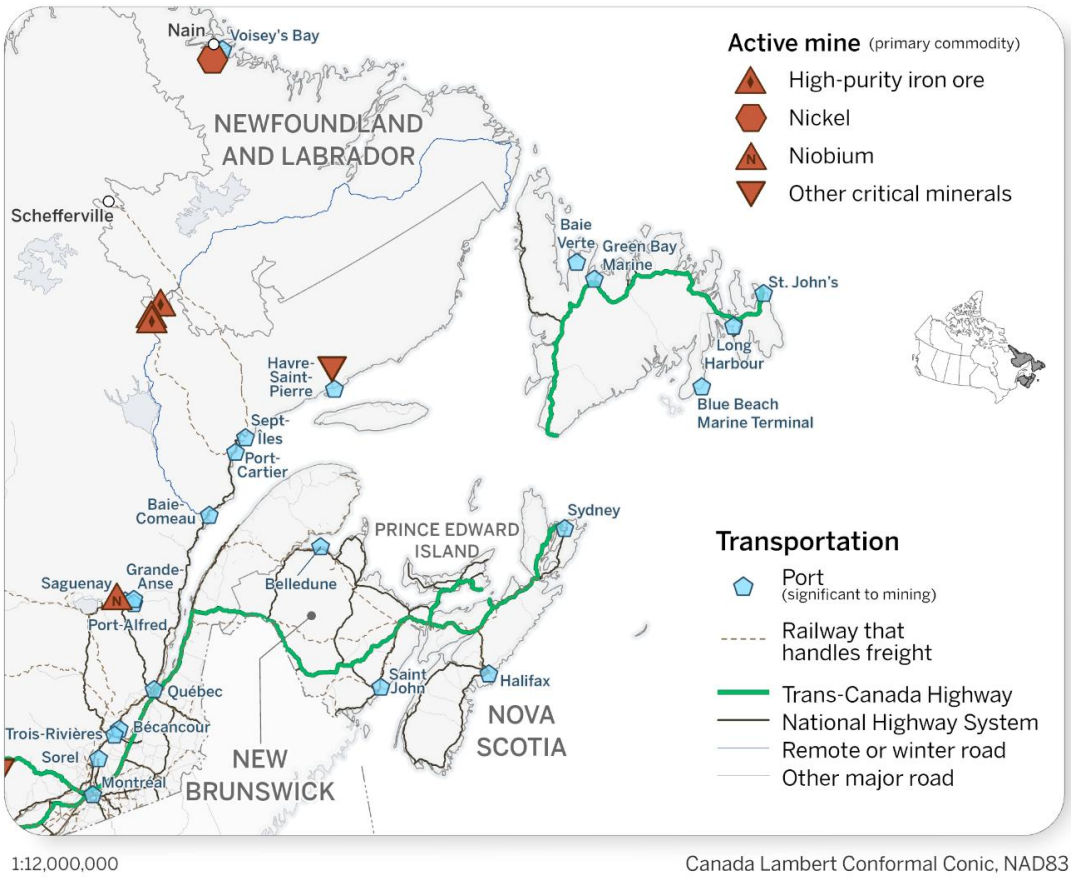
186 RNNR, *Evidence*, 20 October 2025, 1745 (Louis Ouellet, President, Union des Préfets-Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean).

CONCLUSION

In general, witnesses agreed that the development of critical minerals in Canada is crucial, that permitting and assessment delays need to be eliminated, and that steps must be taken to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the current geopolitical situation. However, witnesses also agreed that development must be done properly while respecting the environment and Indigenous rights-holders. The Government of Canada has a role to play in supporting critical minerals development through policy actions; doing so will ensure access to the benefits of critical mineral development for Canada and its allies.

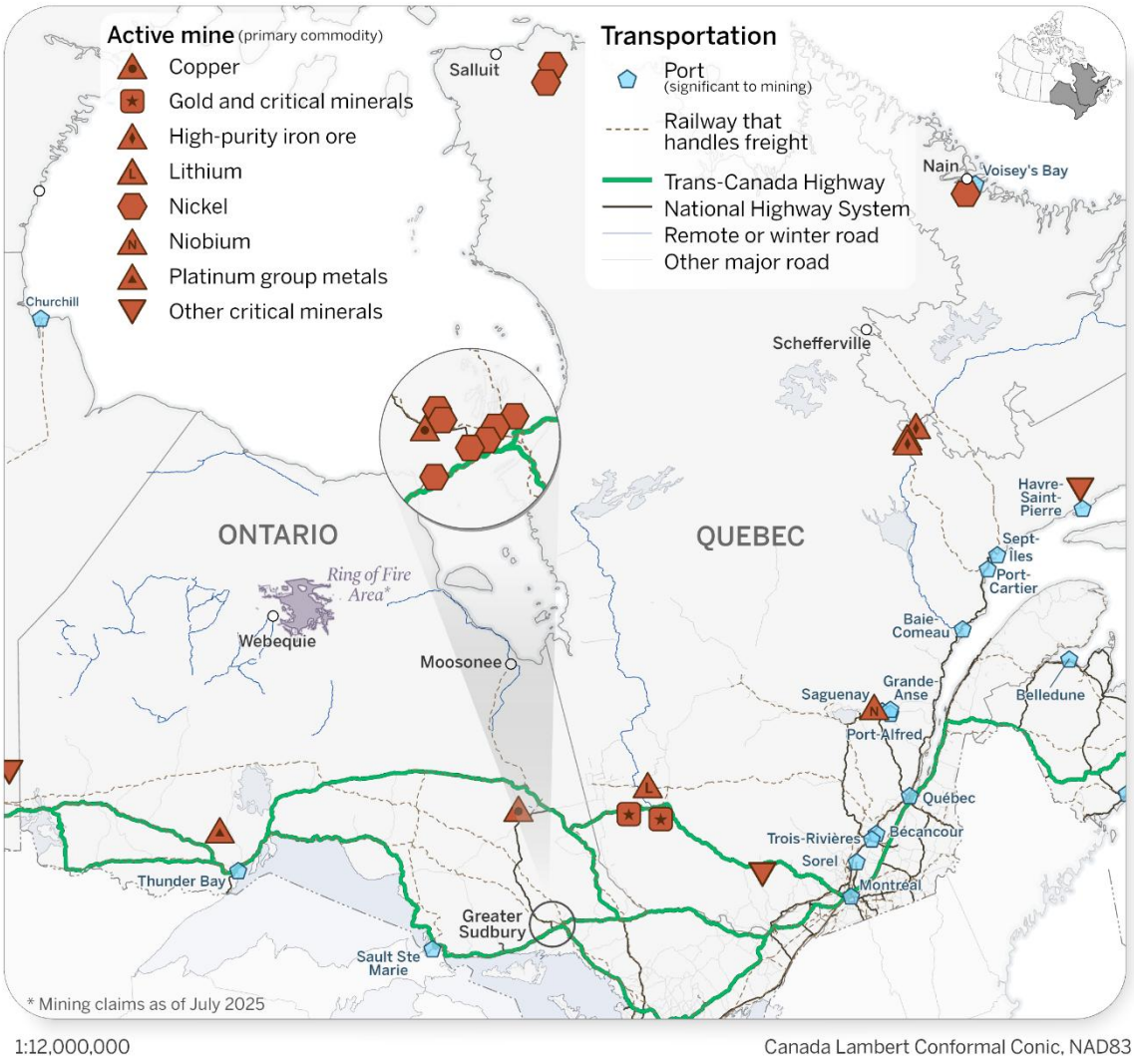
APPENDIX A: CRITICAL MINERAL MINES AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE, BY REGION

Figure 1—Critical Mineral Mines and Transportation Infrastructure: Atlantic



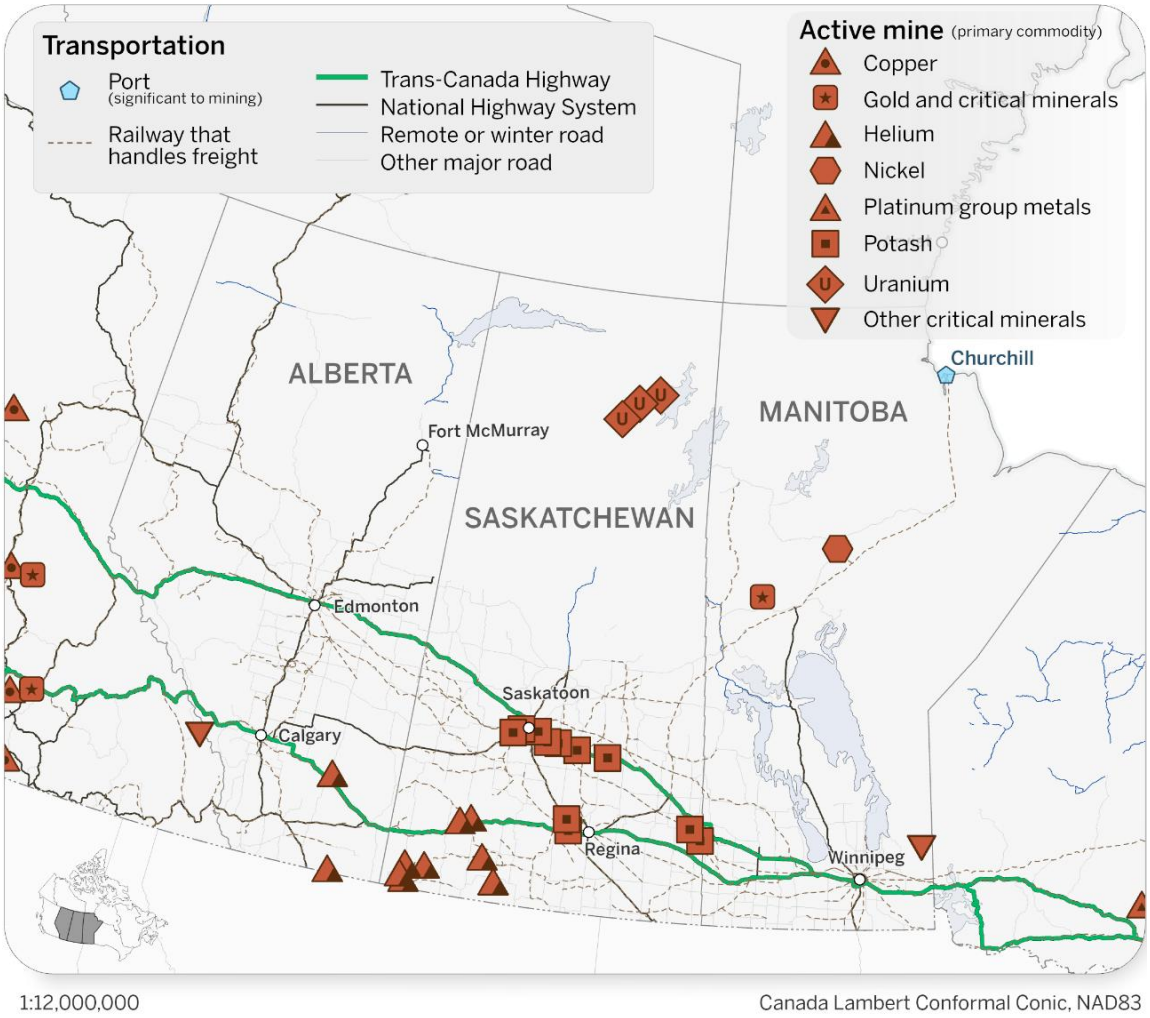
Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025; Government of Quebec, "Réseau routier - RTSS," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

Figure 2—Critical Mineral Mines and Transportation Infrastructure: Central



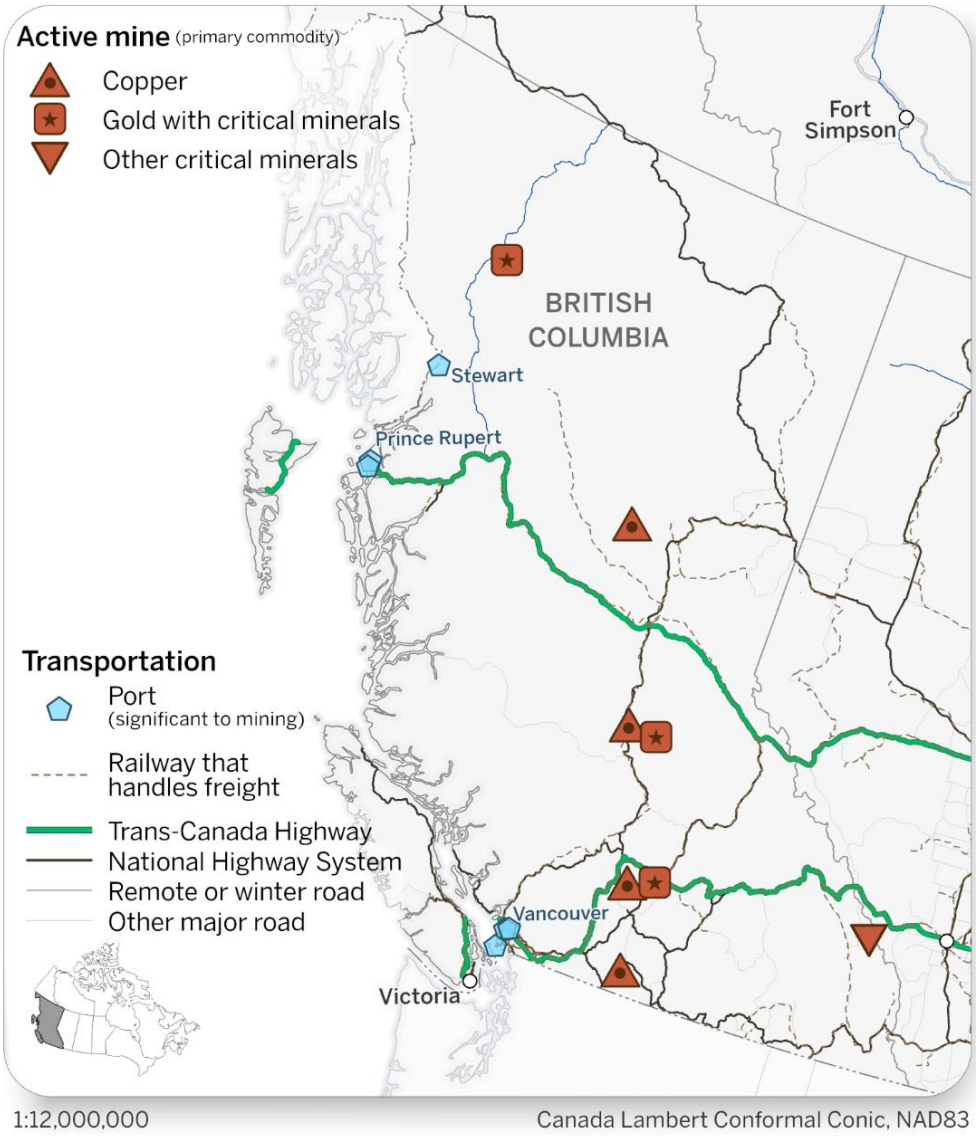
Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025; Government of Ontario, "Ontario *Road Network Composite Service*," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Ontario, *Ontario's Ring of Fire*; Government of Ontario, "OGSEarth - Mining claims", Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Quebec, "Réseau routier - RTSS," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

Figure 3—Critical Mineral Mines and Transportation Infrastructure: Prairies



Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025; Government of Alberta, "National Road Network (NRN) - AB, Alberta," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Manitoba, "Manitoba Road Network 2023," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Ontario, "Ontario *Road Network Composite Service*," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

Figure 4—Critical Mineral Mines and Transportation Infrastructure: British Columbia



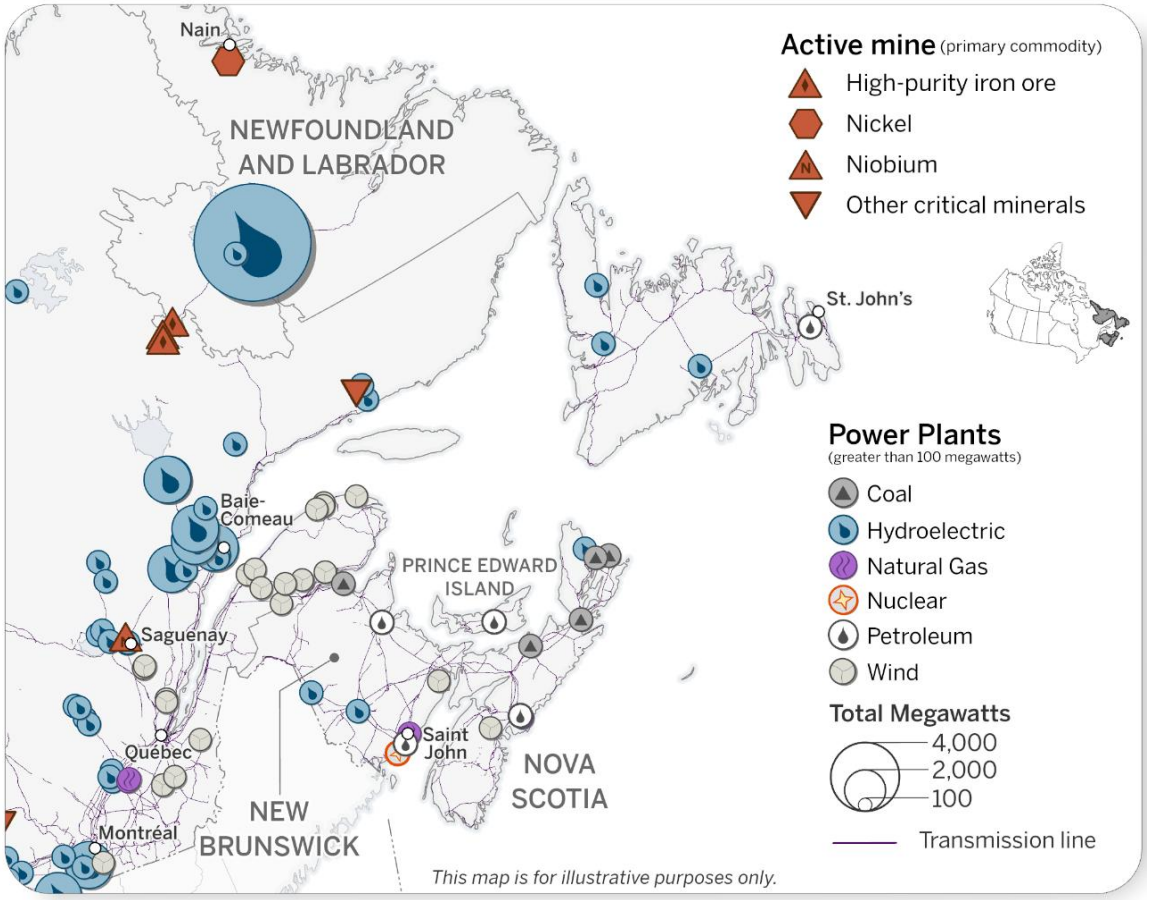
Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025; Government of Alberta, "National Road Network (NRN) - AB, Alberta," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

Figure 5—Critical Mineral Mines and Transportation Infrastructure: North

Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

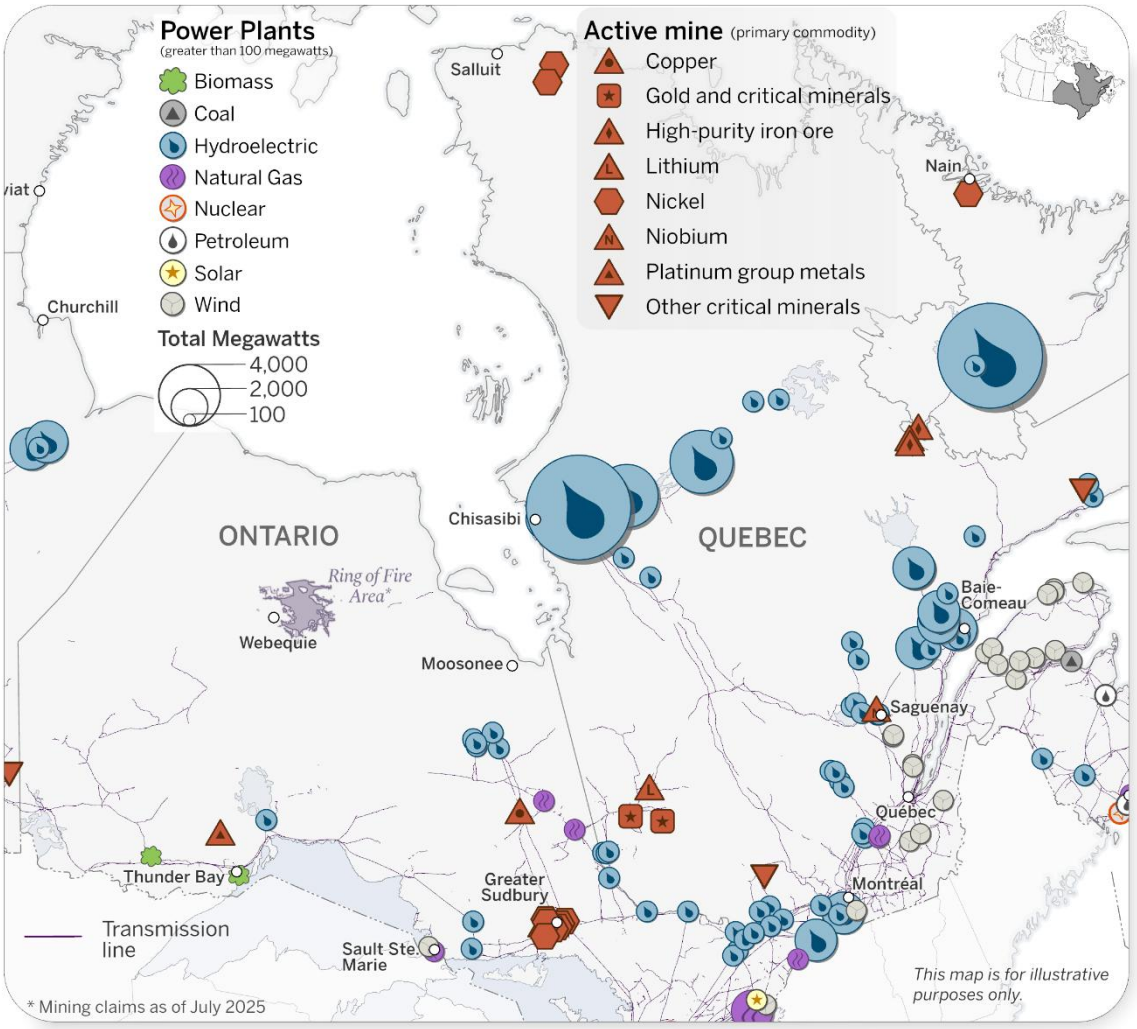
APPENDIX B: CRITICAL MINERAL MINES AND ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE, BY REGION

Figure 1—Critical Mineral Mines and Energy Infrastructure: Atlantic



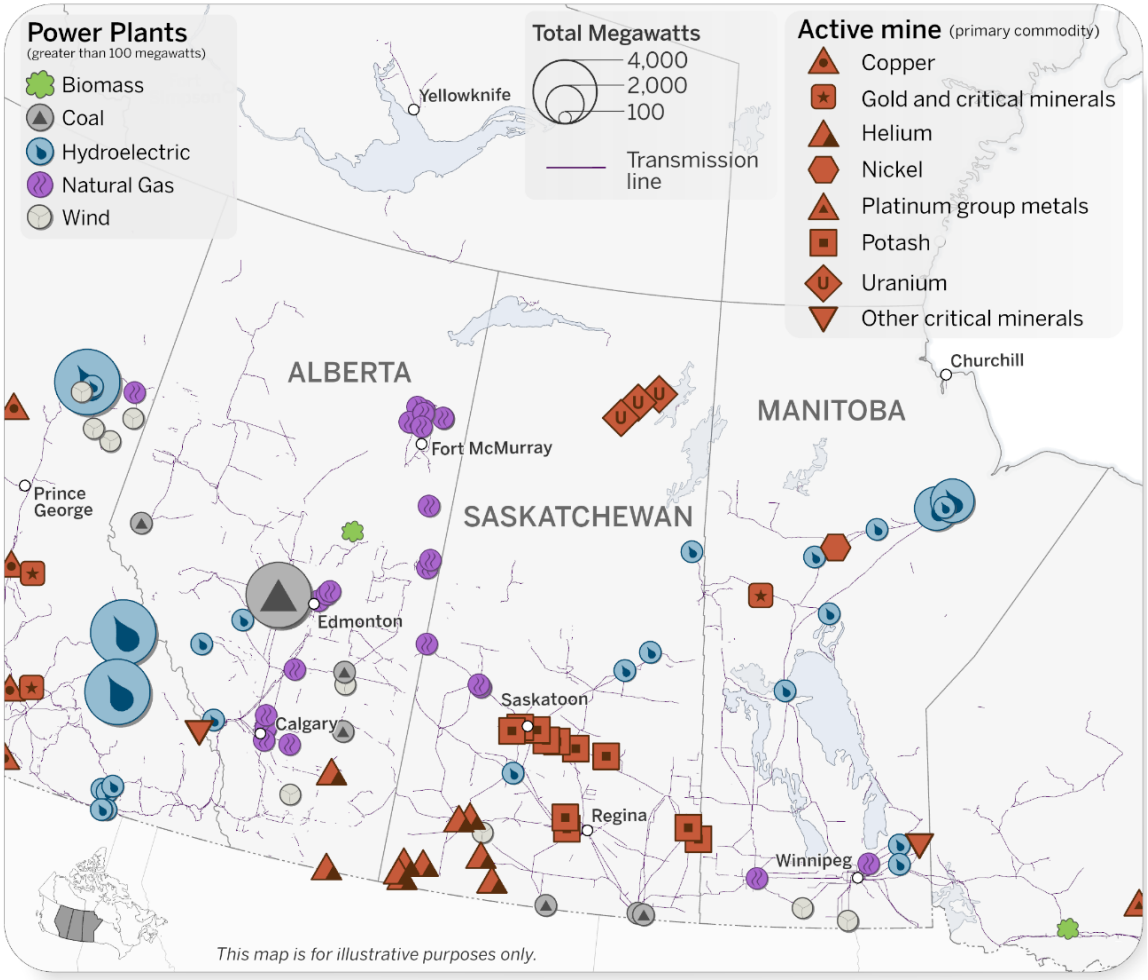
Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Power Plants, 100 MW or more - North American Cooperation on Energy Information*, May 19, 2021; NRCan, "Mines, Energy and Communication Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Resources Management Features," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada*.

Figure 2—Critical Mineral Mines and Energy Infrastructure: Central



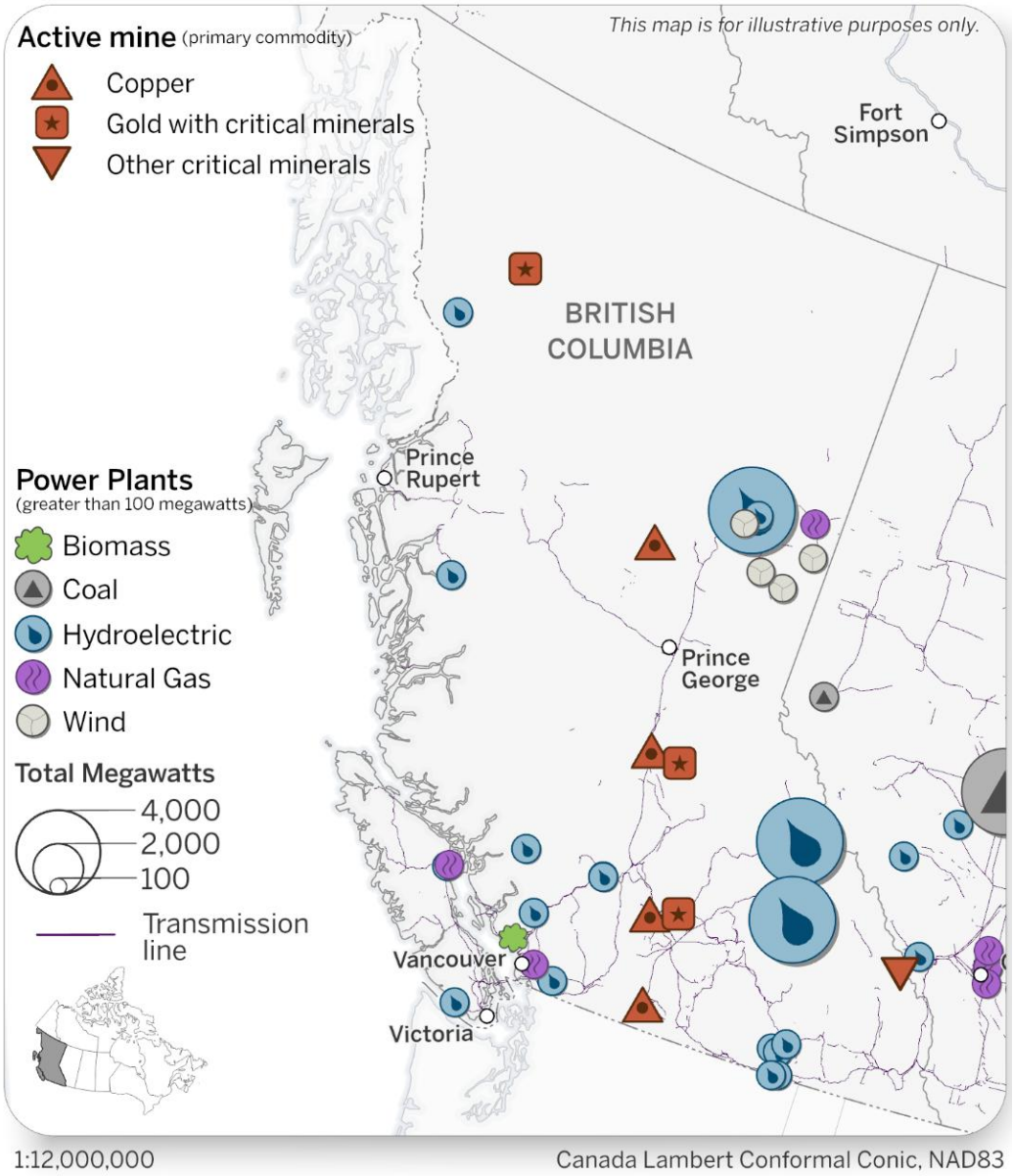
Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Power Plants, 100 MW or more - North American Cooperation on Energy Information*, May 19, 2021; NRCan, "Mines, Energy and Communication Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Resources Management Features," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Ontario, *Ontario's Ring of Fire*; Government of Ontario, "OGSEarth - Mining claims", Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada*.

Figure 3—Critical Mineral Mines and Energy Infrastructure: Prairies



Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Power Plants, 100 MW or more - North American Cooperation on Energy Information*, May 19, 2021; NRCan, "Mines, Energy and Communication Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Resources Management Features," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada*.

Figure 4—Critical Mineral Mines and Energy Infrastructure: British Columbia



Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Power Plants, 100 MW or more - North American Cooperation on Energy Information*, May 19, 2021; NRCan, "Mines, Energy and Communication Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Resources Management Features," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada*.

APPENDIX C: CRITICAL MINERAL ADVANCED PROJECTS AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE, BY REGION

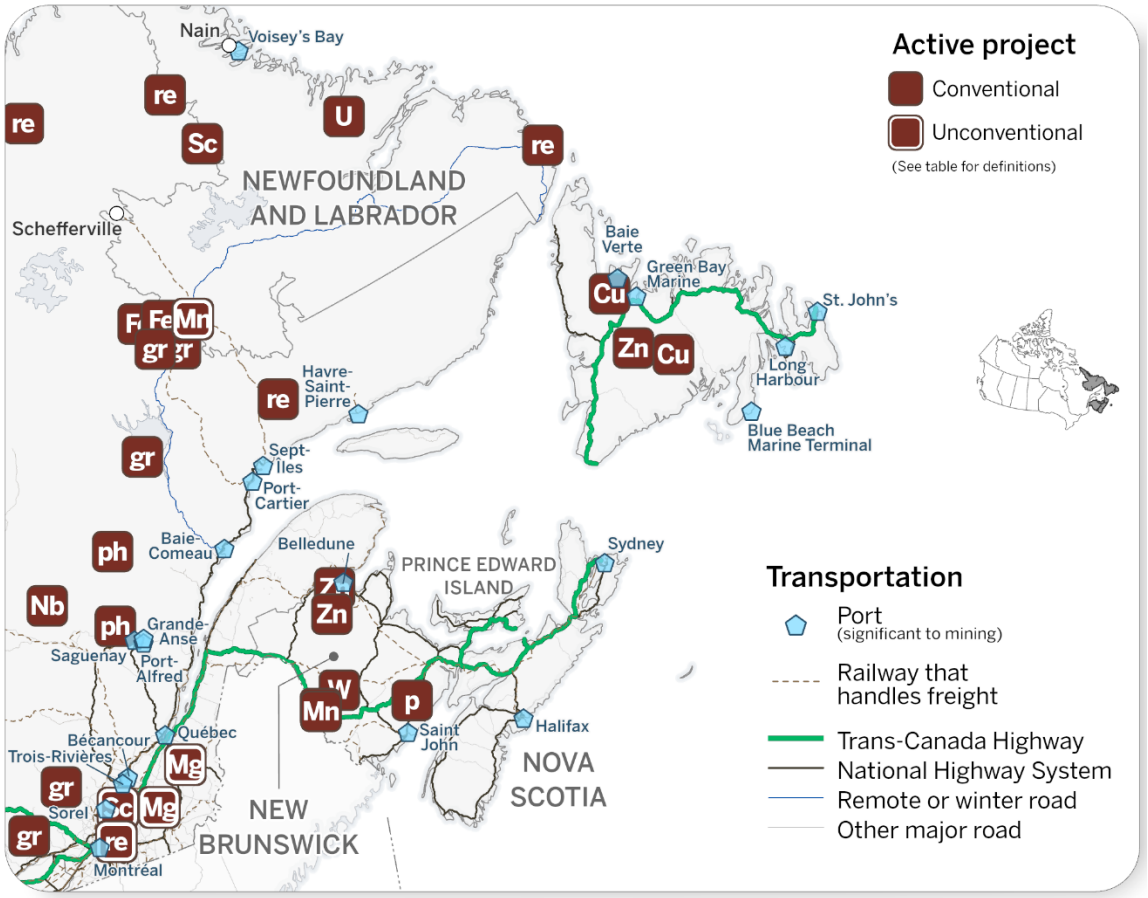
Table 1—Labels on Advanced Projects Maps

Label*	Primary Commodity
Au	Gold and critical minerals
Co	Cobalt
Cu	Copper
Fe	Iron ore
He	Helium
Li	Lithium - various
Mg	Magnesium
Mn	Manganese – various
Mo	Molybdenum
Nb	Niobium
Ni	Nickel
Pd	Palladium
Pt	Platinum
Sc	Scandium
Ta	Tantalum
U	Uranium
W	Tungsten
Zn	Zinc
Zr	Zirconium
gr	Graphite

Label*	Primary Commodity
p	Potash
ph	Phosphate
re	Rare earth elements and critical minerals

Note: *Uppercase labels match elements from periodic table for the primary commodity of the advanced project.

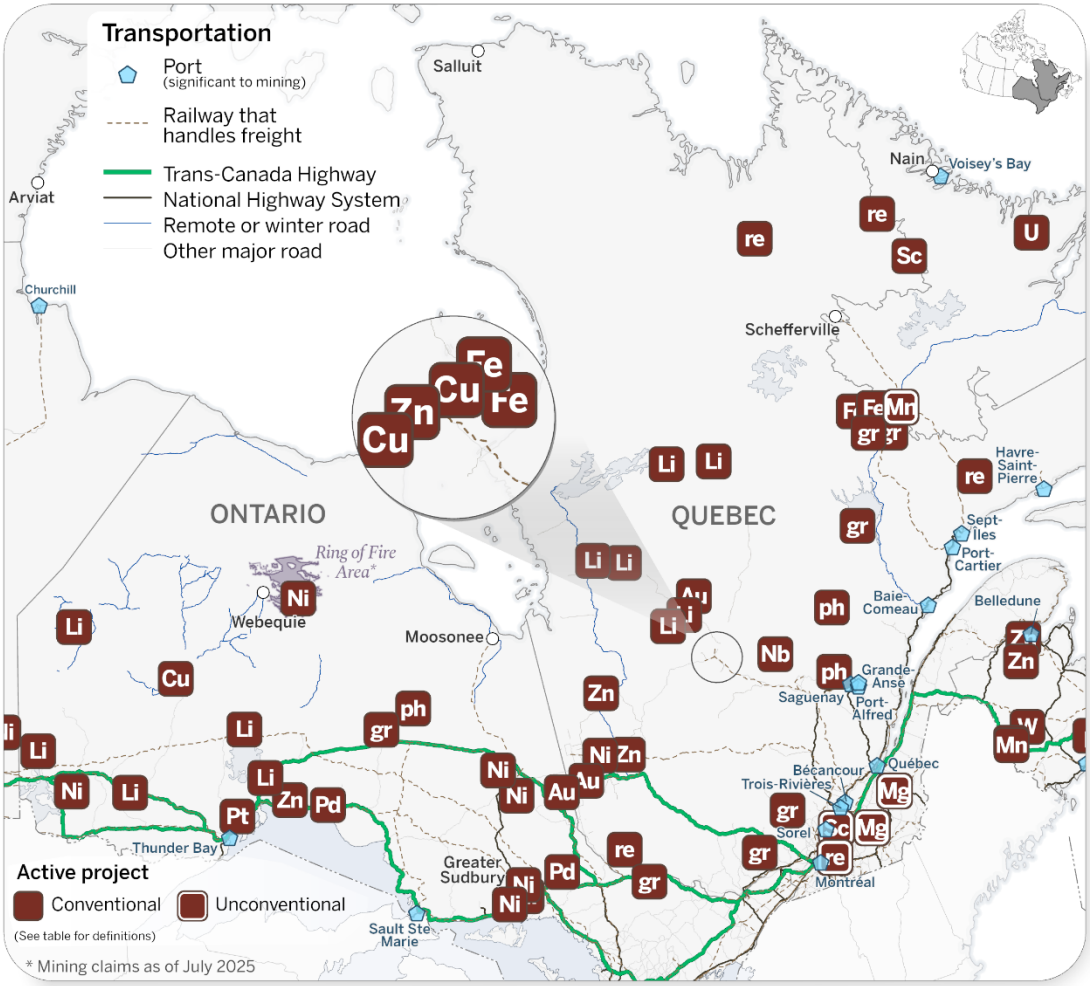
Figure 1—Critical Mineral Advanced Projects and Transportation Infrastructure: Atlantic



1:12,000,000 Canada Lambert Conformal Conic, NAD83

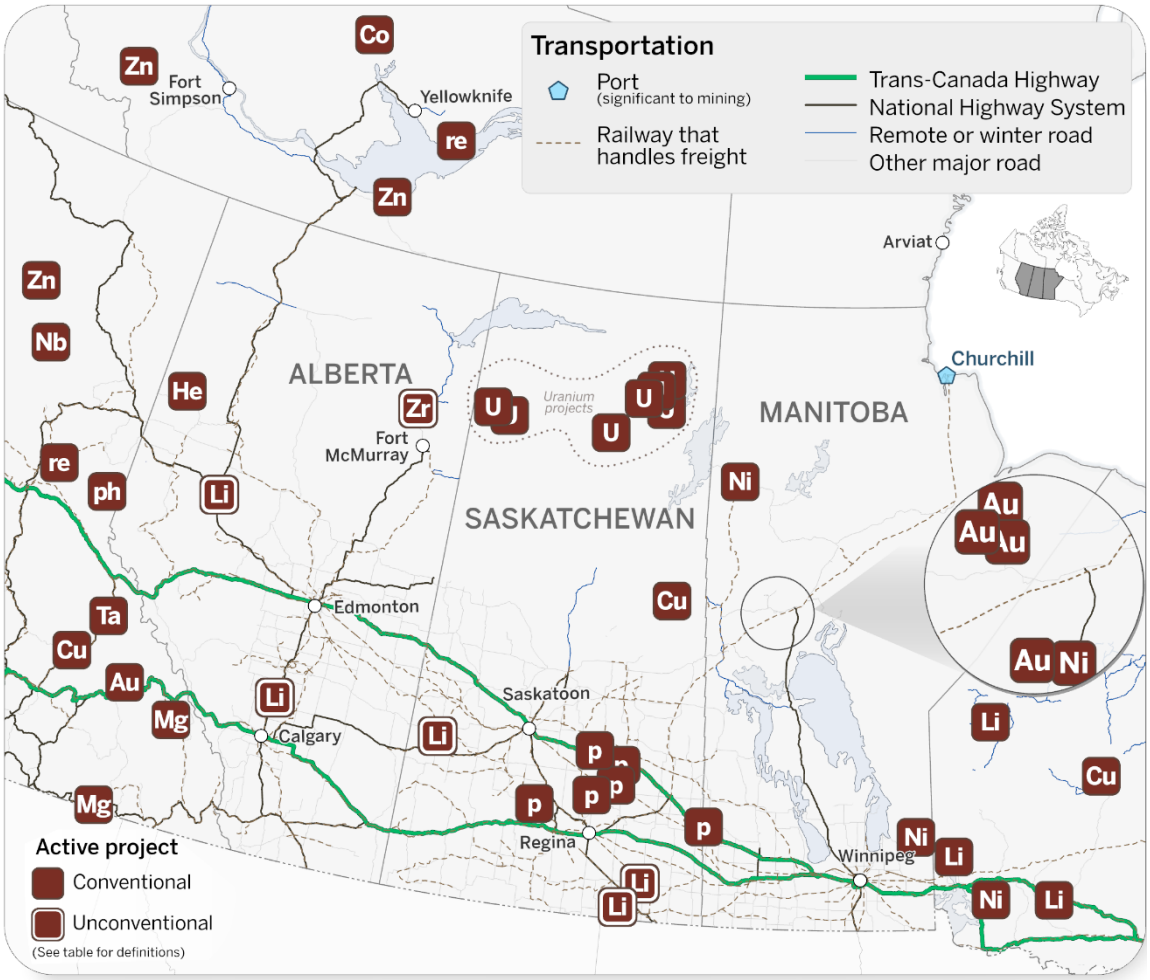
Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025; Government of Quebec, "Réseau routier - RTSS," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

Figure 2—Critical Mineral Advanced Projects and Transportation Infrastructure: Central



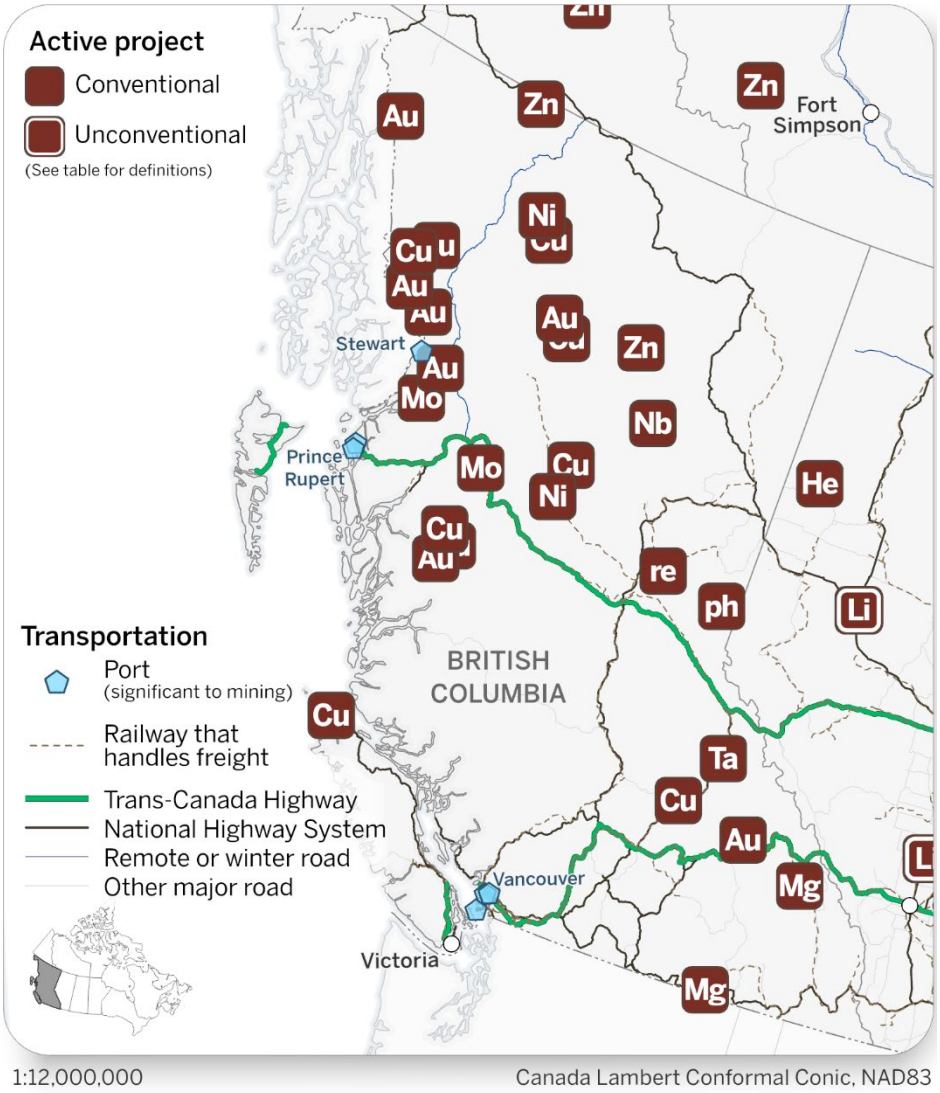
Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025; Government of Ontario, "Ontario *Road Network Composite Service*," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Ontario, *Ontario's Ring of Fire*; Government of Ontario, "OGSEarth - Mining claims", Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Quebec, "Réseau routier - RTSS," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

Figure 3—Critical Mineral Advanced Projects and Transportation Infrastructure: Prairies



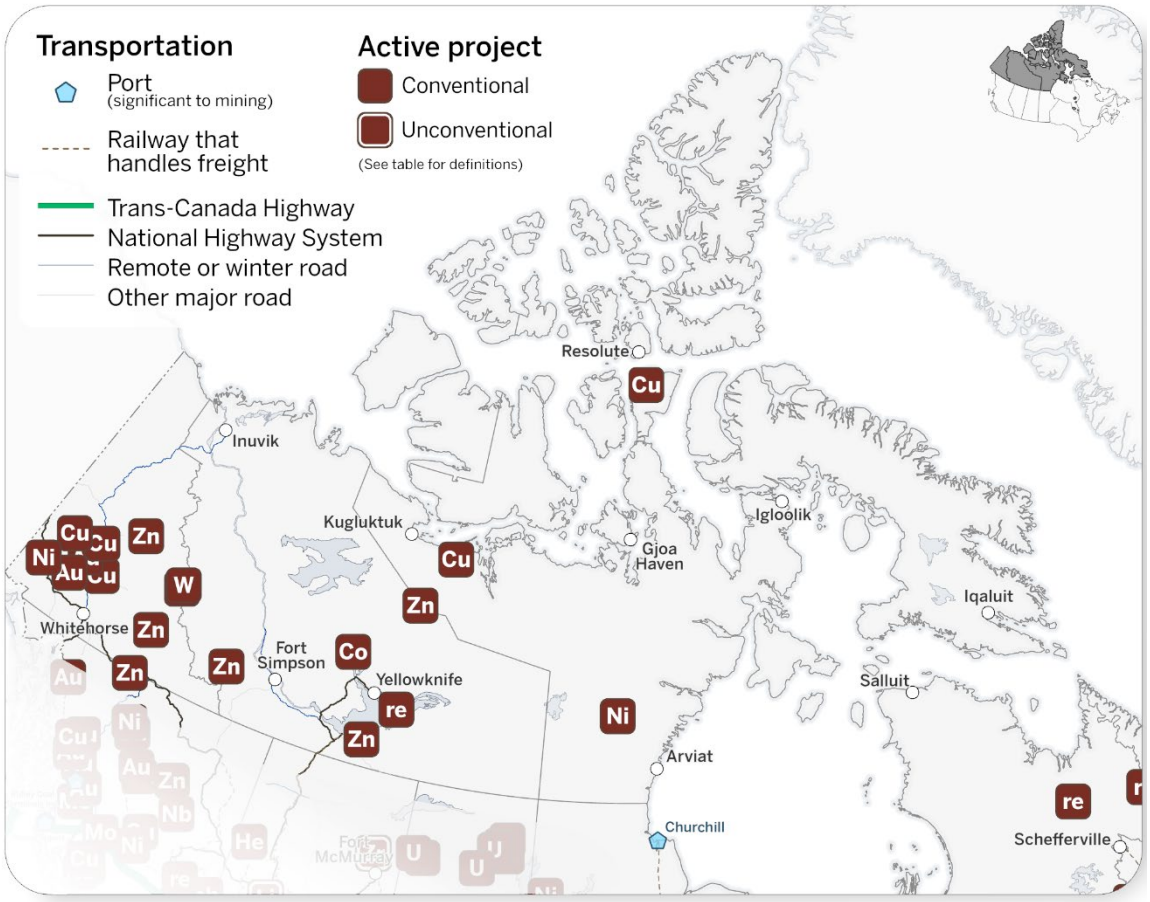
Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025; Government of Alberta, "National Road Network (NRN) - AB, Alberta," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Manitoba, "Manitoba Road Network 2023," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025; Government of Ontario, "Ontario *Road Network Composite Service*," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

Figure 4—Critical Mineral Advanced Projects and Transportation Infrastructure: British Columbia



Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025; Government of Alberta, "National Road Network (NRN) - AB, Alberta," Dataset, accessed 16 December 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

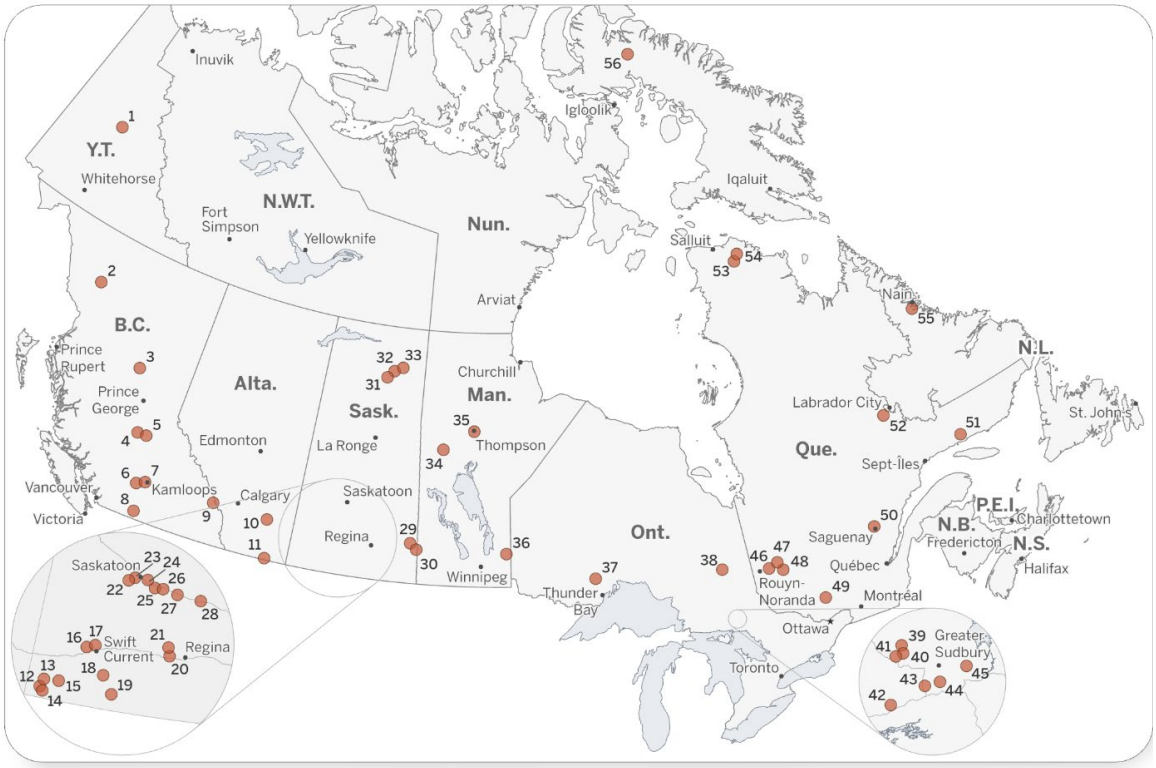
Figure 5—Critical Mineral Advanced Projects and Transportation Infrastructure: North



Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 23 February 2026; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Transport Networks in Canada - CanVec Series - Transport Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; Statistics Canada, *Road network files*, 2025; Railway Association of Canada, "Canadian Rail Atlas," Interactive map, accessed 25 November 2025.The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6.2. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada* and the *Statistics Canada Open Licence*.

APPENDIX D: ACTIVE CRITICAL MINERAL MINES AND OWNERSHIP

Figure 1—Active Critical Mineral Mines (numbered) and Ownership



Sources: Map prepared in 2026, using data obtained from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 18 February 2025; NRCan, *Administrative Boundaries in Canada - CanVec Series - Administrative Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019; NRCan, *Lakes, Rivers and Glaciers in Canada - CanVec Series - Hydrographic Features*, 1:5M, 1 March 2019. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.6. Contains information licensed under the *Open Government Licence – Canada*.

Table 1—Active Critical Mineral Mines and Ownership

Number	Mine	Minerals	Operator Owners	Ultimate Parent Corporation	Country of control[1]
1	Keno Hill Silver District	Silver, zinc, lead	Hecla Mining Company	Hecla Mining Company	United States
2	Red Chris	Gold, copper, silver	Newmont Corporation	Newmont Corporation	United States
3	Mount Milligan	Copper, gold, silver	Centerra Gold Inc.	Centerra Gold Inc.	Canada
4	Gibraltar	Copper, molybdenum, silver	Taseko Mines Limited	Taseko Mines Limited	Canada
5	Mount Polley	Gold, copper, silver	Imperial Metals Corporation	Imperial Metals Corporation	Canada
6	Highland Valley	Copper, silver, molybdenum	Teck Resources Limited	Teck Resources Limited[2]	Canada
7	New Afton	Gold, copper, silver	New Gold Inc.	New Gold Inc.	Canada
8	Copper Mountain	Copper, gold, silver	Hudbay Minerals Inc.	Hudbay Minerals Inc.	Canada
9	Mount Brussilof	Magnesite (fused), magnesia (products)	Baymag Inc.	Refratechnik Holding GmbH	Germany
10	Steveville	Helium	Royal Helium Ltd.	Keranic Industrial Gas Inc.	Canada*
11	Knappen	Helium	Thor Resources Inc.	Thor Resources Inc.	Canada*
12	Battle Creek	Helium	North American Helium Inc.	North American Helium Inc.	Canada*
13	Battle Creek-Cypress	Helium	North American Helium Inc.	North American Helium Inc.	Canada*

Number	Mine	Minerals	Operator Owners	Ultimate Parent Corporation	Country of control[1]
14	Battle Creek S	Helium	North American Helium Inc.	North American Helium Inc.	Canada*
15	Eastend	Helium	North American Helium Inc.	North American Helium Inc.	Canada*
16	Antelope Lake	Helium	North American Helium Inc.	North American Helium Inc.	Canada*
17	Wilhelm	Helium	Canadian Helium Inc.	Canadian Helium Inc.	Canada*
18	Cadillac	Helium	North American Helium Inc.	North American Helium Inc.	Canada*
19	Mankota	Helium	North American Helium Inc.	North American Helium Inc.	Canada*
20	Belle Plaine	Potash, salt	The Mosaic Company	The Mosaic Company	United States
21	Bethune	Potash	K+S Potash Canada	K+S AG	Germany
22	Vanscoy	Potash, salt	Nutrien Ltd.	Nutrien Ltd.	Canada
23	Cory	Potash	Nutrien Ltd.	Nutrien Ltd.	Canada
24	Allan	Potash	Nutrien Ltd.	Nutrien Ltd.	Canada
25	Patience Lake	Potash	Nutrien Ltd.	Nutrien Ltd.	Canada
26	Colonsay	Potash	The Mosaic Company	The Mosaic Company	United States
27	Lanigan	Potash	Nutrien Ltd.	Nutrien Ltd.	Canada
28	Wynyard (Big Quill)	Potash	Compass Minerals	Compass Minerals International Inc.	United States

Number	Mine	Minerals	Operator Owners	Ultimate Parent Corporation	Country of control[1]
29	Esterhazy (K-3)	Potash, salt	The Mosaic Company	The Mosaic Company	United States
30	Rocanville	Potash	Nutrien Ltd.	Nutrien Ltd.	Canada
31	McArthur River	Uranium	Cameco Corporation	Cameco Corporation	Canada
32	Cigar Lake	Uranium	Cameco Corporation	Cameco Corporation	Canada
33	McClean Lake Mine	Uranium	Orano Canada Inc. / Denison Mines Corp.	Government of France	France
34	Lalor Lake	Gold, zinc, copper, silver	Hudbay Minerals Inc.	Hudbay Minerals Inc.	Canada
35	Thompson (T-1 and T-3)	Nickel, cobalt, copper, platinum group metals, gold, silver	Vale S.A.	Vale S.A.	Brazil
36	Tanco	Cesium, lithium (spodumene)	Sinomine (Hong Kong) Rare Metals Resource Co., Ltd	China Nonferrous Metals Mining Group Company Ltd.	China*
37	Lac des Iles	Platinum group metals, gold, nickel, copper, cobalt	Impala Canada Ltd.	Impala Platinum Holdings Limited	South Africa
38	Kidd Creek	Copper, zinc, silver, selenium, indium	Glencore Canada Corporation	Glencore PLC	Switzerland
39	Coleman	Nickel, copper, platinum group metals, gold, silver, cobalt, selenium, tellurium	Vale S.A.	Vale S.A.	Brazil

Number	Mine	Minerals	Operator Owners	Ultimate Parent Corporation	Country of control[1]
40	Fraser	Nickel, copper, platinum group metals, gold, cobalt, silver	Glencore Canada Corporation	Glencore PLC	Switzerland
41	McCreedy West	Copper, nickel, platinum group metals, gold, silver, cobalt, tellurium	Magna Mining	Magna Mining	Canada*
42	Totten	Nickel, copper, platinum group metals, gold, silver, cobalt	Vale S.A.	Vale S.A.	Brazil
43	Creighton	Nickel, copper, platinum group metals, gold, silver, cobalt, selenium, tellurium	Vale S.A.	Vale S.A.	Brazil
44	Copper Cliff Complex	Nickel, copper, platinum group metals, gold, silver, cobalt, selenium, tellurium	Vale S.A.	Vale S.A.	Brazil
45	Garson	Nickel, copper, platinum group metals, gold, silver, cobalt, selenium, tellurium	Vale S.A.	Vale S.A.	Brazil
46	LaRonde	Gold, zinc, copper, silver, cadmium	Agnico Eagle Mines Limited	Agnico Eagle Mines Limited	Canada
47	North American Lithium	Lithium	Sayona Mining Ltd.	Elevra Lithium Limited	Australia
48	Akasaba West (Goldex)	Gold, copper	Agnico Eagle Mines Limited	Agnico Eagle Mines Limited	Canada
49	Lac-des-Îles	Graphite	Northern Graphite Corporation	Northern Graphite Corporation	Canada*

Number	Mine	Minerals	Operator Owners	Ultimate Parent Corporation	Country of control[1]
50	Niobec	Niobium	Magris Performance Materials Inc.	Magris Performance Materials Inc.	Canada
51	Lac Tio	Ilmenite	Rio Tinto Group	Rio Tinto Group	United Kingdom
52	Bloom Lake	High-purity iron ore	Champion Iron Ltd.	Champion Iron Ltd.	Australia
53	Nunavik Nickel	Nickel, copper, platinum group metals, cobalt	Canadian Royalties	Canadian Assets SA	Switzerland
54	Raglan	Nickel, platinum group metals, copper, cobalt, gold, silver	Glencore Canada Corporation	Glencore PLC	Switzerland
55	Voisey's Bay	Nickel, copper, cobalt	Vale S.A.	Vale S.A.	Brazil
56	Mary River	High-purity iron ore	Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation	The Energy & Minerals Group (US)	United States

Sources: Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), *Critical minerals advanced projects, mines and processing facilities in Canada*, 18 February 2025; Statistics Canada, *Inter-corporate Ownership, 2024*, 16 June 2025; S&P Global, "S&P Capital IQ," Database, accessed in January 2026; web sites of various corporations.

Notes 1. Country of control "refers to the country of residence of the ultimate foreign controlling parent corporation, family, trust, estate or related group. Each subsidiary within the global enterprise is assigned the same country of control as its parent." See Statistics Canada, *Corporations Returns Act (CRA)*.

Country of control is shown in the Statistics Canada publication *Inter-Corporate Ownership* (ICO), based on returns filed by Canadian corporations under the *Corporations Returns Act*.

* In the table above, an asterisk (*) next to the country name means that the corporation was not listed in the 2024 edition of the ICO. In those cases, other sources, such as S&P Capital IQ and corporation websites were consulted to determine the country of the parent corporation's headquarters.

2. In December 2025, the Government of Canada approved the merger between Teck Resources and Anglo American. See Teck Resources, *Teck and Anglo American receive Government of Canada approval for merger of equals under Investment Canada Act*, 15 December 2025.

APPENDIX E:
LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee's webpage for this study.

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Commerce Resources Corp.	2025/09/25	3
Cindy Valence, Vice President, Sustainability and Government Affairs		
Corem	2025/09/25	3
Francis Fournier, President and CEO		
Department of Natural Resources	2025/09/25	3
Isabella Chan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Minerals Sector		
Andrew Ghattas, Senior Director, Critical Minerals Centre of Excellence		
Kimberly Lavoie, Assistant Deputy Minister		
Amanda Wilson, Director General, Policy and Economics Branch		
James Bay Joint Action Mining Committee	2025/09/25	3
Régis Simard, General Manager		
Vital Metals	2025/09/25	3
Lisa Riley, CEO and Managing Director		
Cantex Mine Development Corp.	2025/10/02	4
Chad Ulansky, President and Chief Executive Officer		
Champion Iron	2025/10/02	4
David Cataford, Chief Executive Officer		
Newmont Corporation	2025/10/02	4
John Mullally, Head of External Relations and Social Performance, Newmont Canada		

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Western Copper and Gold	2025/10/02	4
Sandeep Singh, President and Chief Executive Officer		
McGill University	2025/10/06	5
A.E. Williams-Jones, Logan Professor of Geology and Geochemistry, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences		
Olga Vasyukova, Research Associate, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences		
Nouveau Monde Graphite	2025/10/06	5
Eric Desaulniers, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer		
Saguenay Port Authority	2025/10/06	5
Carl Laberge, President and Chief Executive Officer		
Union des Préfets-Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	2025/10/06	5
Louis Ouellet, President		
First Nations Major Projects Coalition	2025/10/09	6
Sharleen Gale, Executive Chair of the Board of Directors		
Shaun Fantauzzo, Vice President of Policy		
Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence	2025/10/09	6
Sheldon Wuttunee, President and Chief Executive Officer		
Canadian National Railway Company	2025/10/20	7
Chris Cariglia, Director of Marketing, Metals and Minerals		
Kelly Levis, Vice-President, Industrial Products		
Defense Metals Corp.	2025/10/20	7
Mark Tory, President and Chief Executive Officer		
Fortune Minerals Limited	2025/10/20	7
Robin Goad, President and Chief Executive Officer		
IOS Géosciences	2025/10/20	7
Réjean Girard, Geologist		
JDS Energy and Mining Inc.	2025/10/20	7
Jeff Stibbard, Executive Chairman		

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Union des Préfets-Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	2025/10/20	7
Louis Ouellet, President		
University of Alberta	2025/10/20	7
Daniel Alessi, Professor		
As an individual	2025/10/23	8
Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment, Macdonald-Laurier Institute		
Assembly of First Nations	2025/10/23	8
Julie McGregor, Acting Chief of Staff		
Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak, National Chief		
BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council	2025/10/23	8
Paul Blom, Chief Operating Officer		
First Nations Summit	2025/10/23	8
Robert Phillips, Political Executive		
United Steelworkers Union	2025/10/23	8
Meg Gingrich, Assistant to the National Director		
François Soucy, Legislative Staff Representative		
Business Council of Canada	2025/10/27	9
Michael Gullo, Vice President, Policy		
Helium Developers Association of Canada	2025/10/27	9
Chris Bakker, Co-Chair		
Richard Dunn, Executive Director		
Manitoba Métis Federation	2025/10/27	9
Peter Fleming, Minister of Natural Resources		
Mining Association of Canada	2025/10/27	9
Pierre Gratton, President and Chief Executive Officer		
Photinie Koutsavlis, Vice President, Economic Affairs and Climate Change		
Vale Base Metals	2025/10/27	9
Jeff Gaulin, Vice President, Corporate Affairs		
Spencer Page, Manager, Corporate Affairs, European Union, United Kingdom and International		

APPENDIX F:
LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's webpage for this study.

Arianne Phosphate Inc.

Assembly of First Nations

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council

British Columbia Assembly of First Nations

Canada Climate Law Initiative

Carbon Upcycling Technologies Inc.

Champion Iron

Chemistry Industry Association of Canada

Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly

Coalition pour que le Québec ait meilleure mine

Commerce Resources Corp.

Eau Secours

First Phosphate Corp.

Glencore Canada

Helium Developers Association of Canada

IOS Géosciences

James Bay Joint Action Mining Committee

Kinterra Capital

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

Mining Association of Canada

Nio Strategic Metals Inc.

Northern Confluence

Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada

Resolve of the Resource Exchange

Vale Base Metals

Valory Resources

Vancouver Fraser Port Authority

Volta Metals

Voyager Metals Inc.

Will Landon and Eleanor Skead

World Wildlife Fund-Canada

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* (Meetings Nos. 3 to 10, 25, 30, and 31) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Terry Duguid
Chair

Unlock Canadian Critical Minerals to make Canada more affordable, self-reliant, and sovereign

Conservatives appreciate the committee analysts' efforts to complete the Natural Resources Committee's main report titled An Extraordinary Opportunity for Canada for study on the Development of Critical Minerals in Canada from September 25th, 2025-October 27th, 2025. Conservatives supplement the Committee's main report with additional recommendations, as outlined by witnesses throughout the study's duration, including but not limited to: repeal the Impact Assessment Act in order to establish faster timelines, clear conditions, and policy certainty for proponents, recognize and eliminate the uncompetitive costs of Canada's federal industrial carbon tax, and repeal or fix all the anti-development laws, regulations or taxes that cost or block Canadian mining explorers, producers, developers and processors in the global critical mineral race, while the Major Projects Office has yet to make a significant difference in critical mineral approvals or development in Canada.

Repeal the Impact Assessment Act to shorten approvals, eliminate red tape and respect provincial jurisdiction.

Canada's current complex regulatory process creates significant barriers to development and exposes Canadian mining companies to financial risk through the development of the country's abundant critical mineral resources.

Numerous witnesses testified that excessive regulatory burdens are a primary deterrent to investment in Canada's critical minerals sector. Conservatives have consistently called to repeal and fix the onerous Impact Assessment Act, which has stalled resource projects by imposing lengthy, unpredictable, and costly timelines, that may stop, start and extend multiple times, and requires conditions beyond the scope of individual projects, jurisdictional overlap, and invites input from all, not necessarily directly impacted by a project, in the regulatory process..

Multiple witnesses highlight that anti-development regulations, particularly the Impact Assessment Act, constitute a direct and significant barrier to investment in Canada's critical mineral sector. Jeff Stibbard of JDS Mining and Energy testified that "the effects of the Federal government , such as Bill C-69, the carbon tax, pollution abatement and energy regulation, have hampered the attractiveness of our industry." He warned that when proponents face "15 years of regulatory review for a lot of inputs that aren't necessarily reflective of the area or the impacts on the area, people just turn away," which drives investment out of Canada at a time when the country should be globally competitive, more now than ever.

Sandeep Singh of Western Copper and Gold testified that Canada's multi-year permitting process directly deters investment, noting that investors routinely tell proponents, "We're talking about a multi-year permitting process; come talk to us at the end of it." He emphasized that unless Canada significantly shortens approval timelines, capital will continue to flow elsewhere.

Chad Ulansky of Cantex Mine Development Corporation similarly testified that permitting delays are a major obstacle throughout the critical mineral development process. He explained that “the ever-lengthening time required to obtain the permits necessary to do everything from low-level exploration right through to mine development is a real hindrance to our industry. Commodity prices are cyclical. Investment has a short-term focus, and the geopolitical environment is rapidly changing. We can't spend 10 years or longer waiting for permits to put projects into production.” As Ulansky noted, neither the private sector nor Canada can afford to wait 10 years or longer for permits before projects reach production and profit.

This concern was echoed by Michael Gullo of the Business Council of Canada, who testified, “We've been advocating for a long time that our regulatory approval and permitting processes are too slow in this country. We had warnings about Bill C-69 when it came out, about some of the structural challenges that it could create.” Those warnings were ignored by the federal government, and the result has been a regulatory system that drives investment away and delays critical mineral projects in Canada.

Witnesses also raised concerns about Canada losing mineral investment to more competitive jurisdictions that are more attractive to investors. Robin Goad of Fortune Minerals Limited highlighted this risk in a written submission, stating that “many other mining-friendly jurisdictions have lower costs, shorter development timelines, less regulatory red tape & better certainty of permitting outcome.” Conservatives recommend the federal government make legislative, regulatory and policy changes to achieve this competitive position for Canada.

In a written submission, the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada emphasized the severity of the challenge, noting that “historically, just 0.01% of mineral prospects become a new mine in Canada, and with S&P estimates showing it takes an average of 27 years to navigate regulatory and permitting processes from an initial mineral discovery to building a new mine, attracting risk capital is extremely difficult.” Conservatives know that Canada’s regulatory environment prevents viable projects from advancing, and costs Canada well-paying jobs, spin off economic opportunities, and revenue for all levels of government that provide services and programs in Canada.

Numerous witnesses said that the federal government's permitting scheme is duplicative and encroaches on provincial jurisdiction. Heather Exner-Pirot of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute noted that “some of it is policy such as the Impact Assessment Act, which often added redundancy to provincial assessments and timelines. It added some uncertainty to investors who were wondering when they'll get a return on their money and when they'll start producing. It didn't always give certainty there.”

Jeff Gaulin of Vale Base Metals Canada echoed this concern, and argued that “clearing up the regulatory responsibilities between the feds and the provinces would be extremely helpful to streamline them and make sure they're in the hands of mining policymakers, not the environmental departments.” Jeff Stibbard of JDS Energy and Mining Incorporated further

reinforced this point: “Canada usually works best when the two levels of government stick to their constitutional lanes. Mineral resource development is a provincial domain and should remain so.” Conservatives maintain that respect for provincial and territorial jurisdiction and the elimination of duplication are necessary to restore investor certainty and attract mining investment in Canada.

In a written submission to the committee, Réjean Girard of IOS Géosciences highlighted the prohibitive cost and duration of mining approvals in Canada, that are especially prohibitive for junior and smaller developers to access capital for major mining projects. Girard noted that a preliminary environmental impact study alone can cost proponents $5 million, rising to $10 million when additional environmental complexities are involved, followed by five to ten years of studies. Once consultations begin and the government approval process advances, Girard noted that costs can reach $35 million: “when a project is developed by a small company, there is usually a window of opportunity for financing or for a market that has opened up,” typically lasting one to three years. He warned that “with regulatory time frames exceeding those windows of opportunity, there is no way to raise the necessary funds to complete the studies.”

Witnesses also testified that Canada’s current permitting process, driven by federal legislation, is not improving or becoming more efficient. Instead, approval timelines continue to lengthen, and further delays project development and discourages investment.

Repealing and reforming legislation such as the Impact Assessment Act would eliminate duplicative federal red tape, restore investor certainty, respect constitutional provincial jurisdiction, and enable responsible resource development to move forward in a timely and efficient manner.

Fast track all current mining related projects stuck in the federal regulatory queue, to ensure investor clarity and stability.

Multiple mining and mining-related projects remain stuck at the “in progress” stage within the Liberal government's Impact Assessment Agency registry. This federal backlog leaves projects trapped in the queue for years and deprives investors of certainty. Fast-tracking all projects with transparent changes to accelerate assessments would restore confidence and allow responsible mining development to proceed without unnecessary delay. Conservatives have long argued that fast-tracking must apply to all projects, not only select mining projects granted exemptions or special priority from legislation imposed by the federal government.

Jeff Gaulin of Vale Base Metals Canada testified that accelerated mine permitting must apply broadly, stating, “I would applaud any motions that accelerate mine permitting in Canada, because we are going to need more minerals for all of the above. This is something that shouldn't be restricted to just a few projects. It should be for all responsible projects.”

Chad Ulansky of Cantex Mine Development Corporation called for fast-tracking based on commercial viability rather than government selection. As Ulansky stated, “I wish that every

project that had commercial viability across the country was fast tracked rather than the select few."

Conservatives maintain that the federal government must reduce red tape and remove bureaucratic obstacles from the regulatory process, not impose additional layers that extend approval timelines. Jeff Stibbard of JDS Energy and Mining Incorporated warned that federal overreach has produced unacceptable delays, stating, "The timeline to development—which is the most important threat—is currently unacceptable and primarily the result of the overly bureaucratic process of review and input considerations. This leads to uncertainty of approval and in turn becomes a serious risk to economic outcomes and drives investment away at the earliest and most critical stage of a project's gestation—it's unattractive."

The Federal government has failed to provide an even playing field for proponents, as projects delayed under the Impact Assessment Agency remain subject to a regulator created by the Federal government itself. Conservatives continue to call for all mining projects before the federal regulator to receive fast-tracked assessments, so capital, jobs, and development remain in Canada.

Increase transparency and ensure regular reporting for projects referred to the Major Projects Office.

Witnesses also raised serious concerns that Canada requires broad regulatory reform rather than the referral of select projects to the Major Projects Office for expedited review. Heather Exner-Pirot of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute questioned whether the Major Projects Office provides a viable solution, stating, "As to whether Bill C-5 and the Major Projects Office are the solution, that's unlikely. There are literally hundreds of mining projects in the queue in Canada." Exner-Pirot further warned that "filtering private, proponent-driven projects looking to move to the next stage and looking to attract investment through the bottleneck of the MPO is unlikely to produce the outcomes that we're looking for."

Jeff Stibbard of JDS Energy and Mining Incorporated reinforced that projects referred to the Major Projects Office are already approved and underway, stating "McIlvenna Bay in Saskatchewan and Red Chris in British Columbia are two projects that have been funded and that are well under way and permitted, so I don't know what the impetus was to add money to something that already exists. We're trying to get the ball rolling, not to add fuel to it."

These testimonies align with Conservatives' concerns that the federal government's regular assessment processes traps proponents and projects for uncompetitive timelines, and a lack of policy and regulatory clarity for all. The government's hand-selected referral approach to the Major Projects Office does not address the broader approval backlog and fails to provide a fair or effective pathway for the many mining projects that require timely regulatory decisions to attract investment and proceed to development. This should be an urgent priority for the federal

government, given global attention, opportunities, and competition, not still onerous and uncertain a year after the Prime Minister promised Canada efficient, effective approvals.

Fast track adequate mining related infrastructure.

Conservatives have repeatedly raised concerns about the federal government's failure to act with urgency to support the development of overdue infrastructure in areas with abundant critical mineral reserves.

Chad Ulansky of Cantex Mine Development Corporation explained that mineral deposits frequently exist far from established communities and require government support to connect them to power and transportation networks: “Our resources are much more likely to be found in a place with no infrastructure than next to civilization. As such, we need the government's assistance in connecting these deposits to infrastructure, both power and roads. Without infrastructure, they can't be developed.” His testimony showed the federal government’s failure to enable or provide the basic infrastructure private proponents need to move critical mineral projects forward, including access to electricity, connectivity, and road networks for equipment, materials and product transport in environments already more challenging that Canada’s global competitors.

Ulansky also highlighted the length of federal delays tied to infrastructure approvals: “at our stage of exploration, we face a number of delays. It's largely related to permits for our joint operations, establishing remote infrastructure, so airstrips and such.” That’s why Conservatives call on the federal government to cut excessive, duplicative, confusing red tape that continues to stall necessary infrastructure projects, like two stalled First Nations led road proposals to the Ring of Fire.

Sandeep Singh of Western Copper and Gold emphasized that infrastructure projects do not always require government financing. Instead, he explained the need for faster and more efficient federal approvals so projects can proceed and reach markets: “I will re-emphasize that these are phenomenal infrastructure investments that we're talking about. People will step up to make them. They don't necessarily all need to be backed by the government. What needs to be done is a streamlining of these.” This reflects the Conservatives’ position that the federal government must act quickly to approve infrastructure projects rather than block development.

Connect and supply the mining sector’s growing energy needs with reliable, affordable energy supply and necessary infrastructure.

Multiple witnesses emphasized the need for energy, including a reliable supply of Liquefied Natural Gas, to ensure mining-related projects can operate in remote regions with dependable power. Conservatives have long championed Canadian LNG to reach markets at home and abroad. For Canada’s critical minerals sector to be globally competitive, mining operations require safe and reliable access to energy.

Witnesses also stressed the importance of gas pipelines to serve remote mining operations. Régis Simard of the James Bay Joint Action Mining Committee stated, “In a context where national security and economic security are important issues, the creation of a national northern transportation corridor that includes a pipeline is essential. It would allow for globally competitive industrial development and facilitate our exports overseas.”

Sandeep Singh of Western Copper and Gold echoed the role Liquefied Natural Gas can play in supplying reliable energy to mineral-rich regions. Singh stated, “Our project works off of LNG. I think LNG has a role to play in providing the power to do the things we need to do, but certainly as a country, we need to find and invest in power generation and transmission.”

Conservatives have consistently warned that the federal government has failed to deliver reliable energy to regions that depend on it. Conservatives continue to call on the federal government to repeal all anti-energy legislation that blocks mining projects from access to reliable energy supplies, and accelerate the approval of infrastructure proposals to mining regions.

Expand coordination with Canadian allies to supply Canada’s critical mineral resources and processed products, and combat hostile, authoritarian regimes such as the People’s Republic of China.

Conservatives continue to call on the federal government to strengthen coordination with Canada’s allies to secure a resilient mineral supply chain. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) holds significant global control over critical minerals, and PRC’s dominance of the sector is a threat to Canada and allies. Multiple witnesses testified that although Canada has substantial critical mineral wealth and could serve as a reliable supplier to its allies, the federal government fails to deliver on legislative and policy improvements to attract mining investment and development.

In a written submission, Robin Goad of Fortune Minerals Limited said: “The economic viability of the North American critical minerals and automotive industries is at risk due to unfair Chinese trade practices and western economies need to decouple from Chinese dependence.” His submission emphasized the urgent need for Canada and its allies to reduce reliance on PRC for critical mineral supply.

Conservatives have repeatedly warned that the federal government has failed to counter PRC’s unfair trading practices, which harm Canadian industries, and failed to accelerate Canadian critical mineral development, despite a national strategy and extensive rhetoric. According to Robin Goad: “About 75% of the global cobalt mine supply comes from the not-so-Democratic Republic of the Congo and about 60% of that mining production is controlled by Chinese state-owned enterprises. China controls, I think, over 83% of all cobalt refining and 90% of the cobalt chemical supply. This is a result of a proactive active investment strategy. You're dealing with the Chinese government, and it just doesn't operate with the same economic models that we do. With respect to bismuth, of which we have 12% of the global reserves, China controls 80% of the

mine supply and 90% of the refining supply." Since the PRC, a hostile regime that interferes with and influences Canadian academia, law enforcement, IT, defense, democracy and business, dominates key global mineral markets, Canada's federal government must ensure Canada can be a democratic, reliable, responsible supplier.

Mark Tory of Defense Metals Corporation raised similar concerns and stated, "China currently controls over 70% of global rare earths and over 90% of the downstream industries." This level of control places allied supply chains at risk and highlights the strategic consequences of continued federal inaction.

Chad Ulansky of Cantex Mine Development Corp. testified that "our allies around the world are turning to us to see whether we can supply the strategic critical metals they've historically sourced from such countries as Russia and China, who are now withholding these metals for competitive and military gain." Ulansky stated that the critical mineral Germanium, which supports both military and civilian technologies, receives between 80 and 90 percent of its global supply from Russia and the PRC. Although Canada holds the only germanium-producing mine in North America, Ulansky noted that this mine operation is scheduled to end production in 2031. Conservatives continue to express concern that the federal government has failed to act with urgency to position Canada as the preferred supplier of strategic minerals to allied nations rather than leaving them dependent on adversarial regimes.

Heather Exner-Pirot of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute also warned of excessive reliance on the PRC, particularly for essential minerals. She testified "Our allies are asking us almost daily for access to more critical minerals and trying to reduce their dependence on China. China has been very forcefully and muscularly using and manipulating markets, putting on export restrictions in the last two years and affecting supply chains here in North America." Her testimony reinforced concerns about the PRC's deliberate market manipulation and its impact on allied economies.

Conservatives maintain that the federal government has failed to demonstrate to Canada's allies that this country stands as a reliable partner for critical mineral production and supply. Canada has a responsibility to respond to allied demand for secure access to critical minerals rather than direct capital toward unstable or hostile regimes.

Richard Dunn of the Helium Developers Association of Canada reflected similar concerns and testified, "Japanese companies are getting very concerned about increasing reliance on Russian helium and the partnership that Russia has with China, potential for weaponization." Dunn stated **"**Whether it's Japan, Taiwan or Korea, there's significant helium use in semiconductor production. Japan, for example, has listed helium as a critical material for its semiconductor supply chain. Without helium, you don't make semiconductors. Of course, the implications there are enormous with respect to economies on the digital side and also for defence applications." His testimony highlighted the strategic importance of secure helium supply for advanced manufacturing and national security.

Conservatives believe the federal government must position Canada urgently to cut permitting timelines, clarify conditions and jurisdictional overlap, and solve policy and regulatory uncertainty so proponents can invest and develop Canadian minerals to supply critical minerals for allies who actively seek alternatives to the PRC. Mark Tory of Defence Metals Corporation noted: “China currently controls over 70% of global rare earths and over 90% of the downstream industries. They've imposed new export restrictions, and Canada has named rare earths as a critical mineral priority.”

Conservatives continue to call on the federal government to expedite assessments and approvals to enable Canada to be a stable domestic and international supplier of critical minerals. Witness testimony demonstrated that Canada holds abundant mineral resources while authoritarian regimes retain dominant global market control. As global demand for critical minerals accelerates, Canada must act decisively to secure access for itself and its allies to protect economic resilience and national security.

Repeal the Federal Industrial Carbon Tax ensure investor certainty and respect provincial jurisdiction.

Multiple witnesses testified that Canada’s industrial carbon pricing system has undermined Canada’s competitiveness in the critical minerals sector. Conservatives have long called for the removal of the federal industrial carbon tax to ensure Canadian businesses can compete with other nations, such as the United States.

Heather Exner-Pirot of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute highlighted the direct impact of carbon pricing and electricity policy on competitiveness, stating, “The industrial carbon price is also an issue in competitiveness, especially in the processing and smelting phases, but also in several others. There are also the clean electricity regulations. We are starting to see some energy and electricity scarcity in this country. Mines need reliable access to electricity and we're starting to see that this is becoming a problem.” Her testimony demonstrates that uncertain and burdensome federal, and provincial, policies now threaten both access to, and the reliability of, power supply required for expanded mineral development, especially in remote regions.

Conservatives have consistently warned that these damaging anti-development policies weaken Canada’s mineral supply chain and allow competitors such as the People’s Republic of China to capture growing global market share. Jeff Stibbard of JDS Energy and Mining Incorporated echoed this concern and testified that anti-development legislation, including carbon taxes, undermines the attractiveness of Canada’s mining sector for investment and growth.

The Government takes comprehensive steps to strengthen mineral processing and refining capacity in Canada, ensuring that the full economic value of domestically extracted minerals is captured in Canada rather than exported abroad.

Conservatives argue that the federal government must work with proponents to incent significant expansion in mineral processing and refining capacity so Canadians capture the full value of domestically extracted resources and strengthen the national economy. Currently, much of the global processing and refining capacity remains concentrated in authoritarian regimes, including the PRC.

Multiple witnesses testified that Canada is forced to send minerals abroad for processing and refining. Régis Simard of the James Bay Joint Action Mining Committee stated, "This is a historic time in terms of global demand for critical minerals. Canada has the opportunity to respond to this demand in a significant way. Our development strategies are not currently competitive, and our environmental analysis processes are too cumbersome and too unpredictable. This situation is not conducive to attracting major companies with the expertise and scale needed to develop Canadian deposits and do secondary processing." His testimony demonstrated that federal policy deters investment in domestic processing capacity.

In a written submission to the committee, Réjean Girard of IOS Géosciences warned of a sharp decline in Canada's refining capacity, stating, "More alarmingly, the number of metal smelters or refineries has declined steeply in Canada (aluminum excepted), as the country exports raw concentrates for foreign processing. Despite the increase in nominal mining production, the refining capacity of the major metals (copper, zinc, nickel, lead, cobalt and cadmium) decreased from 1.61 million tonnes in 2005 to 1.21 million tonnes in 2021."

Jeff Stibbard of JDS Energy and Mining Inc. reinforced this point and testified, "Again, Canada used to have an abundance of smelters in places like Flin Flon and Thompson in Manitoba. British Columbia had 12. Today we have two: an aluminum smelter and a lead and zinc smelter." Conservatives recommend the federal government explore all options to address this decline amid continued global demand for critical minerals and processing.

Eric Desaulniers of Nouveau Monde Graphite testified that "Also, on building the full process, it's one that is 100% currently done in China." His testimony underscored the extent of Canada's reliance on foreign jurisdiction for downstream mineral production.

For Canada to achieve genuine self-sufficiency, the federal government must ensure full development of the critical minerals supply chain within Canada. Reliance on foreign jurisdictions for processing and refining of critical minerals, particularly the PRC, poses a direct risk to Canada's national security. Such dependence creates vulnerabilities, where adversarial states could restrict access or apply economic and geopolitical pressure against Canada and its allies.

Mark Tory of Defense Metals Corporation noted that other countries have already moved to secure processing capacity and testified, "China has been doing all of this for a number of years. Lynas has been doing it with the deposit out of Australia and processing in Malaysia. MP Materials has been doing it down in the U.S. near California and Nevada." His testimony illustrated that both allied and adversarial nations have secured strategic advantage in processing and refining.

The current federal government has allowed the PRC to dominate a global market Canada could credibly replace and compete in, both to protect Canada's domestic security and to supply critical minerals to allies who urgently seek alternatives from authoritarian control and dependence.

For the federal Crown to adequately consult with Indigenous Peoples to get to yes in a good way.

Witnesses agreed that mining development needs to be done in partnership with Indigenous people and communities. Chad Ulansky highlighted "…both government and industry need to ensure that we have an open and trustworthy relationship with First Nations and are able to offer them a real interest in having resources developed in their traditional territories."

Conservatives call on the federal government to ensure the Crown meet its duty to consult with impacted First Nations, and not default that role to regulators, provinces or proponents. Sandeep Singh talked about "…increased emphasis on the federal government's responsibility to consult with First Nations." Sheldon Wuttunee stated, "I would say unequivocally those opportunities for equity participation are important, but we also recognize that we have a nation-to-nation relationship as First Nation governments with the Government of Canada."

Conclusion

Conservatives believe the Committee report fails to identify the Impact Assessment Act as a major hindrance to the sector, while multiple witnesses called for its full repeal. The Committee's final report also failed to acknowledge specific witnesses who highlighted the People's Republic of China's dominance of the critical mineral sector as a risk to Canadian industry, and to the national security of Canada and Canada's allies. A Conservative government would work with industry to repeal or reform the anti-development laws witnesses identified. Conservatives would overhaul the Impact Assessment Act and axe the federal industrial carbon tax so Canada's critical minerals sector can supply allies with needed resources. For Canada to strengthen economic and national security, the Liberal government must take serious action to shorten approval timelines, remove policy and regulatory uncertainty, reduce costs on proponents, and work with allies to build secure, reliable mineral supply chains and refining capacity.