Dear Dr. Kimball:

The Minerals Science and Information Coalition (MSIC) would like to express support for the current initiatives and activities of the National Minerals Information Center (NMIC) as laid out by the January 22, 2015 letter from Director Steven M. Fortier to MSIC.

MSIC is a broad-based alliance of organizations that represent all stages of the supply chain. Importantly, the coalition supports federal investments in minerals science and research. For this reason, MSIC commends the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and NMIC for work as the primary national source of minerals science and information. The NMIC initiatives and activities listed for 2015 underscore the usefulness of minerals science and information to every sector of our national and global economy.

The coalition is very interested in the potential, natural extension of NMIC’s current work on minerals forecasting. The new Mineral Commodity Criticality Assessment and Early Warning Project shows important movement towards more proactive minerals science and information analyses. The ability to anticipate potential supply chain disruptions is important to safeguarding uninterrupted access to the minerals necessary for our economic and national wellbeing. Combining accurate and timely information with supply and demand forecasting will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of supply chain vulnerabilities. Providing new money to develop comprehensive minerals supply forecasting at USGS is a precursory necessity to address the nation’s abiding dependence on minerals.

The addition of several different studies to NMIC’s annual work products demonstrates an impressive understanding of the impact timely and accurate information can have on both the private and public sectors. Commonsense initiatives such as the following will help guide mineral development and usage: fact sheets on conflict minerals; studies on the impact of the Ebola outbreak on the mining and processing industry; production and consumption estimates for hydraulic fracturing sand in the U.S.; a report on trends in Cuba’s mining and petroleum extraction industries; historical global statistics for mineral commodities; and a mineral commodity criticality assessment and early warning project.

The work of NMIC under the leadership of the USGS is key to the responsible development and consumption of minerals and raw materials that underpin every sector of the economy. MSIC supports NMIC’s 2015 initiatives and urges development of USGS’s mineral forecasting capabilities.

Sincerely,

American Chemical Society
American Exploration & Mining Association
American Geosciences Institute
American Physical Society
Minerals Science and Information Coalition

Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey of Pennsylvania
The Fertilizer Institute
Geological Society of America
Industrial Minerals Association – North America
Materials Research Society
Mining and Metallurgical Society of America
National Electrical Manufacturers Association
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association
Society of Economic Geologists
Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration, Inc.

Cc: The Honorable Sally Jewell
   Secretary
   U.S. Department of the Interior

   Ms. Jennifer Gimbel
   Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science
   U.S. Department of the Interior

   Dr. Dan Hayba
   Acting Associate Director, Energy and Minerals, and Environmental Health
   U.S. Geological Survey

   Dr. Larry Meinert
   Program Coordinator, Mineral Resources
   U.S. Geological Survey

   Dr. David Russ
   Regional Director, Northeast
   U.S. Geological Survey

   Dr. Steven Fortier
   Director, National Minerals Information Center
   U.S. Geological Survey

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