

Apex Critical Metals Accepted into U.S. Defense Industrial Base Consortium (DIBC)

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VANCOUVER, February 23, 2026 - [Apex Critical Metals Corp.](#) ("Apex" or the "Company") (CSE:APXC)(OTCQX:APXCF)(FWB:KL9) is pleased to announce that it has been accepted into the U.S. Defense Industrial Base Consortium ("DIBC"), a U.S. Department of Defense-supported initiative focused on accelerating collaboration between industry, academia, and government to advance technologies and supply chains critical to U.S. national security.

The DIBC supports the development and security of strategic and critical material supply chains, including rare earth elements ("REEs"), niobium, and other materials essential to advanced manufacturing, aerospace systems, energy transition technologies, and defense applications.

Apex's portfolio of North American critical mineral projects - including the Company's U.S.-based Rift Rare Earth Project in Nebraska and its Cap Project in British Columbia - are aligned with U.S. and allied government priorities focused on securing domestic and allied sources of critical minerals used in permanent magnets, advanced alloys, superconducting technologies, and defense systems.

As a member of the DIBC, Apex joins a network of traditional and non-traditional defense contractors, technology developers, research institutions, and federal agencies working to accelerate innovation and strengthen supply chain resilience. Membership provides opportunities to participate in federally sponsored initiatives and collaborative programs related to critical mineral exploration, processing, and downstream supply chain development.

"Apex's acceptance into the DIBC reflects the growing strategic importance of secure North American supply chains for rare earth elements and other critical minerals," said Sean Charland, President and CEO of Apex Critical Metals. "With increasing global focus on defense readiness, advanced manufacturing, and electrification, we believe Apex is well positioned to support U.S. and allied supply chain security initiatives through the advancement of our critical mineral projects."

For more information on the DIBC initiative: <https://www.dibconsortium.org/>

About Apex Critical Metals Corp. (CSE:APXC) (OTCQX:APXCF) (FWB:KL9)

Apex Critical Metals Corp. is a Canadian exploration company focused on advancing rare earth element (REE) and niobium projects that support the growing demand for critical and strategic metals across the United States and Canada. The Company's flagship Rift Project, located within the highly prospective Elk Creek Carbonatite Complex in Nebraska, U.S.A., hosts extensive rare earth rights surrounding one of North America's most advanced niobium-REE deposits. Historical drilling across the complex has reported broad intervals of high-grade REE mineralization, including intercepts such as 155.5 m of 2.70% REO and 68.2 m of 3.32% REO.

In Canada, Apex continues to advance its 100%-owned Cap Project, located 85 kilometres northeast of Prince George, British Columbia. The 2025 drill program confirmed a significant niobium discovery with 0.59% Nb₂O₅ over 36 metres, including 1.08% Nb₂O₅ over 10 metres, within a 1.8-kilometre-long niobium trend. The Cap Project continues to demonstrate strong potential for niobium mineralization within a large and previously unrecognized carbonatite system.

With a growing portfolio of critical mineral projects in both Canada and the United States, Apex Critical Metals is strategically positioned to help strengthen domestic supply chains for the minerals essential to

advanced technologies, clean energy, and national security. Apex is publicly listed in Canada on the Canadian Securities Exchange (CSE) under the symbol APXC and quoted on the OTCQX market in the United States under the symbol APXCF, and in Germany on the Borse Frankfurt under the symbol KL9 and/or WKN: A40CCQ. Find out more at www.apexcriticalmetals.com and watch our videos at <https://apexcriticalmetals.com/apex-critical-metals-corporate-video/> and make sure to stay in touch by signing up for free news alerts at <https://apexcriticalmetals.com/news/news-alerts/>, or by following us on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook or LinkedIn.

On Behalf of the Board of Directors

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Neither the Canadian Securities Exchange nor its Regulation Services Provider (as that term is defined in the policies of the CSE) accepts responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this release.

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION:

This news release may contain "forward-looking statements" under applicable Canadian securities legislation. Forward-looking statements consist of statements that are not purely historical, including any statements regarding beliefs, plans, expectations or intentions regarding the future. Forward-looking statements in this news release include (without limitation) statements regarding the Company's Canadian and US-based prospective assets (more particularly described above), including the potential for additional acquisitions. Forward-looking statements are subject to various known and unknown risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results, performance or developments to differ materially from those contained in the statements. Risks that could change or prevent these events, activities or developments from coming to fruition include: the Company's properties are at an early stage of development and no current mineral resources or reserves have been identified by the Company thereof, that we may not be able to fully finance any additional exploration on the Company's properties; that even if we are able to raise capital, costs for exploration activities may increase such that we may not have sufficient funds to pay for such exploration or processing activities; the timing and content of any future work programs; geological interpretations based on drilling that may change with more detailed information; potential process methods and mineral recoveries assumptions based on limited test work and by comparison to what are considered analogous deposits that, with further test work, may not be comparable; testing of our process may not prove successful or samples derived from our properties may not yield positive results, and even if such tests are successful or initial sample results are positive, the economic and other outcomes may not be as expected; the anticipated market demand for REE and other minerals may not be as expected; the availability of labour and equipment to undertake future exploration work and testing activities; geopolitical risks which may result in market and economic instability. There can be no assurance that such statements will prove to be accurate, as actual results and future events could differ materially from those anticipated in such statements. Accordingly, readers should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. The forward-looking statements herein are made as of the date hereof, and the Company disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law.

SOURCE: Apex Critical Metals Corp.

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