Requester Information

Legislator Name: Owens, Derrin R.

Created Date: January 21st 2026 **Submitted Date:** January 21st 2026

Section 1: Requester Details

Description:

The Critical Mineral Recovery Program will establish the Critical Mineral Resources Network (CMRN) as a comprehensive 501(c)(6) organization headquartered in Utah, transforming abandoned mine lands into strategic economic assets while addressing environmental hazards and strengthening domestic critical mineral supply chains. This initiative will deploy advanced XRF technology to conduct comprehensive assessments of up to up to 5 high-priority abandoned mine sites by 2027 across the state of Utah. Our initial pilot will focus on developing comprehensive critical mineral resource profiles that include economic potential assessments. These profiles are expected to identify recoverable resources valued between $10-30 million. The program includes complete organizational formation with executive leadership, finance and accounting systems, regulatory compliance framework, sophisticated digital marketplace platform, and membership infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability and position Utah as the leading center for critical mineral recovery innovation. By combining environmental restoration with economic development through advanced assessment technology and comprehensive data acquisition, this program will create up to 8 direct high-paying jobs and up to 12 indirect positions in rural communities while reducing dependence on foreign-sourced critical minerals essential for clean energy and defense technologies. This program will establish Utah as the premier authority on abandoned mine land critical mineral recovery in the United States.

Legislative designee contact information:

Name: Denee Hayes

Organization: Critical Mineral Resources Network

Position: CEO

Section 2: Funding Information

How will the appropriation be used?

Category	One-time		Ongoing
Personnel Services	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $265,000.00	$222,000.00
In-State Travel	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $30,000.00	$15,000.00
Out-of-State Travel	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $7,000.00	$5,000.00
Supplies and Equipment	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $45,000.00	$20,000.00
Technology Purchases	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $225,000.00	$50,000.00
Infrastructure/Capital Investments	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $200,000.00	$0.00
Other Charges/Pass Thru	2026: 2027:	$0.00 $136,000.00	$270,000.00

Expenditure Total

One-time 2026	One-time 2027	Ongoing 2027
$0.00	**$908,000.00**	**$582,000.00**

Funding Sources:

General Fund

Amount Requested:

2026 (One-time)	$0.00
2027 (One-time)	$908,000.00
2027 (Ongoing)	$582,000.00

Revenue Total

One-time 2026	One-time 2027	Ongoing 2027
$0.00	**$908,000.00**	**$582,000.00**

Is this a multi-year project?

Yes

Is this project scalable if the Legislature does not fund the full requested amount?

Yes

A short explanation describing how the project might be scaled?

While we can implement a phased approach if necessary, full funding would allow Utah to maximize its competitive advantages and establish market leadership in critical mineral recovery. Reduced funding will limit our capacity to sample and characterize AML sites, potentially allowing other states to capture this emerging market and the associated economic benefits. With adequate investment now, Utah can secure first-mover advantage and become the national hub for this growing industry.

Section 3: Agency Information

Subjects:

Economy

01166

Agency:

063 / Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity

Type of entity to receive pass-through funding:

Private Not for Profit

Grant recipient

Yes

Requested Direct Award Grant Recipient

Critical Mineral Resources Network

Section 4: Performance Outcome Measurement

Who would benefit the most from this request (who is the target audience)?

Primary Beneficiaries: Utah state and private landowners with abandoned mine sites seeking economic opportunities and environmental remediation solutions, particularly in rural counties where abandoned mine land property values could increase by $2-5 million across assessed sites Rural mining communities requiring economic revitalization and job creation, with up to 12 indirect positions created in historically mining-dependent areas Critical mineral supply chain companies, processors, energy, Aerospace and Defense seeking domestic sources of critical minerals, rare earth elements, and other strategic materials to reduce dependence on foreign sources Secondary Beneficiaries: State agencies including Utah Department of Natural Resources and Department of Environmental Quality gaining access to comprehensive digital platform for environmental remediation planning and economic development initiatives Utah taxpayers through $75,000-150,000 in annual tax revenue generation and establishment of Utah as national headquarters for critical minerals industry Mining and technology companies seeking domestic mineral sources and environmental compliance solutions through membership in Utah-based organization Federal and Academic Partners: EPA, Department of Energy, and USGS gaining innovative approaches to abandoned mine land remediation with potential for federal matching funds University of Utah and Utah State University through research collaboration opportunities, student internship programs, and workforce development in emerging critical minerals sector National Security and Environmental Beneficiaries: United States defense and clean energy industries through strengthened domestic critical mineral supply chains reducing geopolitical vulnerabilities Environmental restoration stakeholders through accelerated remediation of toxic sites threatening watersheds and development of financially sustainable cleanup models

What is this project or program intended to accomplish?

This program will establish the Critical Mineral Resources Network (CMRN) as a comprehensive 501(c)(6) organization that assesses up to 5 strategically selected abandoned mine sites across Utah by 2027.The initiative will demonstrate the economic viability of transforming environmental liabilities into strategic assets worth up to $10-30 million in recoverable critical minerals while creating Utah's first comprehensive digital marketplace connecting site data with processing companies and federal partners. Through advanced XRF technology deployment and standardized data acquisition, the program will establish sustainable revenue models generating up to $500,000 annually by Year 5. The framework includes complete organizational infrastructure with executive leadership, regulatory compliance systems, and quality assurance protocols to ensure full operational capacity. This positions Utah as the national headquarters for critical mineral recovery innovation, transforming the state's mining legacy from environmental liability into economic opportunity while strengthening America's critical mineral independence.

How will the Legislature know whether the project or program achieved its intended purpose?

Success will be measured by the complete establishment of CMRN as a fully operational 501(c)(6) organization with professional governance structure, executive leadership team, and financial management systems, combined with the completion of up to 5 comprehensive site assessments by 2027 generating detailed critical mineral resource profiles with economic potential valuations totaling up to $10-30 million in potential recoverable value and demonstrating clear return on investment ratios of up to 10:1.for future processing and remediation projects. The program will create measurable economic impact through up to 8 direct high-paying jobs including technical specialists, and administrative support, while establishing formal partnerships with up to 5 industry organizations, and developing a fully functional membership platform with founding members generating up to $100,000-200,000 in annual membership revenue by Year 2. Environmental and operational success will be demonstrated through the identification and mapping of critical minerals with independent laboratory validation ensuring scientific credibility. The Legislature will receive detailed quarterly progress reports documenting organizational milestones achieved, site assessments completed with specific resource valuations, partnerships established with industry and federal agencies, membership growth and revenue generation, economic impact metrics including job creation and local spending, and comprehensive annual evaluations with specific recommendations for program scaling and long-term sustainability, culminating in final deliverables including a fully operational organization, comprehensive digital platform accessible to DNR, validated resource assessments worth tens of millions of dollars, and a detailed roadmap for national expansion that positions Utah as the premier authority on abandoned mine land critical mineral recovery innovation in the United States.

Section 5: Other Supporting Documents

Intent Language Documents

The Legislature intends that $1,600,000 from the General Fund provided by this item be used to establish the Critical Mineral Resources Network as a comprehensive 501(c)(6) organization founded in Utah, including complete organizational formation with executive leadership and governance infrastructure, use of advanced critical mineral assessment capabilities via mobile XRF technology for detailed site characterization of abandoned mine lands, creation of a sophisticated digital marketplace platform

integrating geological and economic data with membership management and payment processing systems, implementation of quality assurance frameworks, establishment of sustainable revenue models through membership dues and data licensing, coordination with federal agencies to maximize available Abandoned Mine Lands and Department of Energy funding opportunities, and development of replicable business models that transform environmental liabilities into revenue-generating assets for rural community development, environmental remediation, and state economic growth while positioning Utah as the national leader for critical mineral recovery innovation and establishing CMRN as the premier authority on abandoned mine land resource recovery in the United States.

Previous Funding Documents

This represents the initial investment to establish the Critical Mineral Resources Network as a new 501(c)(6) organization. The program has been developed through private investment and volunteer efforts totaling approximately $50,000 in preliminary development costs including market research, partnership development, and initial planning activities.

Full Time Employees

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