

CVMR's Michael Hargett: Rewiring U.S. Mineral Security Through Modular Nickel Refining

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June 10, 2025 – “The United States is buying metal it hasn’t even mined yet,” warned Michael Hargett, president of [CVMR \(USA\)](#), as he sketched a supply chain stretched thin by import dependence and policy uncertainty. In an interview with InvestorNews host Tracy Hughes, Mr. Hargett explained that CVMR—best known for its proprietary Chemical Vapour Metal Refining technology—has built “modular systems that go down to as small as 2,000 tons per year,” giving producers a way to refine nickel and cobalt domestically while controlling capital outlays. That flexibility, he argued, is vital when the U.S. Geological Survey lists a dozen minerals for which the nation is “100 percent import-reliant” and another 29 where foreign supply exceeds half of domestic demand. “The areas of antimony for munitions, gallium, germanium, [and] graphite for batteries should be priorities for us right now,” he said, even as CVMR concentrates on transition metals essential to “the electrical utility and energy areas.”

Mr. Hargett’s critique of Washington’s policy framework was blunt. “Tariffs right now have us all in a whirlwind because we don’t know—it’s tariffs on, tariffs off,” he observed, noting that manufacturers often secure concentrates “six months ahead of time” or longer for rare earths, only to have trade terms shift mid-stream. He called the Inflation Reduction Act’s mineral provisions “quite a jumble,” with tax incentives

covering copper—"not on the critical materials list"—while leaving key segments of the value chain unsupported. The greatest vulnerability, he said, is processing: "That should be the number-one priority," because without refining capacity even new mines will fail to anchor supply.

CVMR is pressing that case abroad as well. An April 11, 2025, [release](#) detailed the company's license to build Albania's first nickel refinery on a five-hectare site in Qafe Thana, a project expected to employ more than 500 people and showcase CVMR's "pollution-free and hermetically sealed plants." The move, Mr. Hargett suggested, mirrors a broader trend toward "repatriation of critical minerals" and underscores the urgency of translating America's geological bounty into domestic metal output before geopolitical headwinds tighten further.

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