Kerem Usenmez on Volta Metals' Rare Earths, Gallium, Lithium, Cesium and Tantalum Project Ontario

written by InvestorNews | February 20, 2026

Volta Metals Ltd. (CSE: VLTA) (FSE: D0W) (OTC Pink: VOLMF) is a critical mineral exploration company focused on rare earths, gallium, lithium, cesium and tantalum in Ontario. The company owns, has optioned and is currently exploring a portfolio of projects in what it describes as one of the world's most prolific and emerging hard-rock critical mineral districts.

"We started this company as a private company," said Kerem Usenmez, President, CEO and Director. "We put together the projects and went public through an RTO. There was an existing company that we acquired."

A geological engineer by training, Mr. Usenmez said he has worked "with juniors on the exploration side and majors on the production side of things," including underground mining, consulting across Canada and internationally, and advancing a prior zinc development through a PEA and feasibility study.

Volta began with lithium in northwestern Ontario. "The lithium projects is what we started the company with initially," he said. "All of our projects are in Ontario. We are obviously critical mineral focused, and projects are road accessible. That's the main pillars that we founded the company on."

The company now controls "11 km of strike length since the discoveries," he said, noting that lithium occurs as brine or

hard rock. “This is obviously hard rock on surface.” He added that a neighboring project hosts “a 10-million-ton resource,” and described the location as “just outside of Thunder Bay.”

Its primary focus, however, is the Springer Rare Earth Project near Sturgeon Falls. “That has a resource from 2012 that we’re expanding on and finding more of it. It’s getting bigger,” he said.

According to the company’s February 11, 2026 news release, drill hole SL25-23 returned 81 g/t Ga2O3 (plus 1.4% TREO) over 131.9 meters, including 110 g/t Ga2O3 over 15.7 meters, with a high of 332 g/t Ga2O3 over 1 meter. The company said these results rank among the highest-grade and most continuous gallium assays reported in North America.

“Gallium is very strategic right now,” Mr. Usenmez said. “China produces 98% of it. The other 2% of global production comes from three other countries that are not in North America. The US has zero production for years.”

He described gallium’s use in semiconductors, particularly gallium nitride chips, “making it faster, make videos and AI possible,” and said artificial intelligence is “extremely strategic and defense related.” Historically, he said, gallium has been produced as a byproduct of aluminum or zinc smelting. “So really having a gallium resource is almost non-existent.”

At Springer, he said, “we are coming up with beyond 50 with 100-plus meters of consistent numbers,” citing 82 g/t over more than 130 meters in the first borehole. “Gallium is going to add maybe 25% to 35% to the project in terms of value. That’s our estimate. We’ll see when the resource comes out.”

Volta has retained SLR Consulting (Canada) Ltd. to update the Springer resource estimate, with completion expected by the end

of February 2026.

On financing, Mr. Usenmez said insiders have participated in every round. “When we started as a private company, we put it at 10 cents… every share we bought 10 cents with our own money. When we went public, we went at 10 cents as well.”

The company has 115 million shares outstanding and insiders own approximately 25 percent. “The last raise was $2.8 million. We have just around $3 million in the account,” he said, adding that the current treasury covers drilling, metallurgy, baseline studies and the upcoming resource update. The company’s market capitalization, he said, is “ranging around $17–$18 million.”

On processing, Volta is working with Idaho National Laboratory, the Saskatchewan Research Council, a university lab in Ontario and SGS. Of the Idaho relationship, he said, “They are extremely interested in our deposit—rare earth—because it’s unique, because it’s clean. There’s no uranium or thorium to process.” He added, “We have no commitments at the moment. We’re not paying for this.”

Regarding critical minerals more broadly, Mr. Usenmez said Western governments are beginning to respond. “Most of these critical minerals—critical elements—are highly strategic for defense, for the modern world, and independence from one country basically, which is China at the moment.” He cited recent policy measures in the United States and Australia that “put a base floor for certain rare earth elements which we need here,” adding, “That gives me confidence.”

To access the complete interview, click here

Don’t miss other InvestorNews interviews. Subscribe to the InvestorNews YouTube channel by clicking here