

Trump Executive Order Elevates Potash to U.S. Critical Minerals List, Boosting Agricultural Security

written by Alastair Neill | March 27, 2025

President Donald Trump has issued an executive order officially designating potash as a critical mineral, a decision praised by The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) as significant for bolstering U.S. agricultural resilience and enhancing national security.

[Ed Thomas](#), Vice President of Government Affairs at TFI, expressed enthusiasm about the executive order's potential to boost domestic potash production. "This order will accelerate permitting and reduce regulatory obstacles, facilitating the growth of potash mining operations within the United States," said Thomas.

Currently, the U.S. produces only about 0.2% of its potash needs, heavily relying on imports primarily from Canada and overseas. This dependency exposes the agricultural sector to considerable risk. Thomas cautioned, "Any disruption, intentional or accidental, in our potash supply could severely compromise our nation's food production capabilities."

Thomas emphasized that Trump's executive order strongly urges the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to reinstate potash to its critical minerals list, noting its earlier removal in 2022 after initially being included in 2018. "Adding potash back to this list ensures it remains a critical consideration in U.S. mineral policy," he stated.

The Fertilizer Institute also anticipates this decision as a step towards including phosphate on the critical minerals list.

Global Potash Industry: Navigating Complex Challenges

As of March 2025, potash—a vital potassium-rich fertilizer essential for global agriculture—is at a pivotal moment, influenced by geopolitical conflicts, evolving trade policies, and significant investments in new production capacity. Notably, potash currently holds a critical mineral designation in India, New Zealand, and Canada.

Geopolitical tensions, particularly stemming from the Ukraine conflict, have reshaped the global potash landscape. Despite Western sanctions, increased shipments from Russia and Belarus to Asia and South America have stabilized global potash markets. This shift has helped moderate fertilizer prices, benefiting key agricultural economies like Brazil and the U.S., though logistical costs still create regional price disparities.

North America: Production and Tariff Challenges

In North America, Canada continues to dominate potash production through Saskatchewan's vast reserves. In contrast, the U.S., despite significant reserves, remains heavily dependent on imports. Complicating this reliance, recent U.S. tariffs of 25% on most Canadian products have raised fertilizer costs dramatically, placing economic strain on American farmers, especially corn growers dependent on potash.

BHP's Jansen Project: Transforming Global

Potash Production

BHP Group Limited's (NYSE: BHP) Jansen project in Saskatchewan, Canada, stands out as a major development in global potash production. With a total investment approaching CAD\$14 billion, Jansen is on track to become one of the world's largest, most sustainable potash mines, expected to produce 8.5 million tonnes annually by late 2026. BHP recently committed an additional USD\$4.9 billion for Stage 2, signaling confidence in the project's significance and future market demand.

Brazil is targeted as a prime destination for Jansen's production, aligning strategically with the nation's growing agricultural sector and escalating fertilizer demands.

Market Outlook and Sustainability Challenges

The global potash market, currently valued at approximately \$66.11 billion, is projected to reach \$101.57 billion by 2034, growing at a CAGR of 4.89%. This expansion is driven by rising fertilizer demand crucial for increasing food production globally.

However, sustainability concerns remain paramount. In Brazil's Amazon rainforest, a proposed potash mining project has stirred significant debate within indigenous communities over environmental impacts, including deforestation, pollution, and threats to local water supplies.

Conclusion

President Trump's recent [executive order](#) represents a significant turning point for the U.S. potash industry, underscoring the mineral's strategic importance amid shifting

geopolitical tensions and global environmental concerns. As of March 2025, the potash sector stands at a pivotal crossroads, striving to meet increasing agricultural productivity demands while navigating complex trade policies and sustainability issues. Major initiatives, notably BHP's Jansen project, illustrate a strong commitment to addressing future global demand. However, the industry faces the intricate challenge of aligning expanded production capacities with environmental stewardship and equitable economic development. From a Canadian standpoint, diversifying export markets toward China, Brazil, and India may strategically reduce reliance on the U.S., indicating a competitive posture in an evolving international market landscape.