August 21, 2026

Cleveland-Cliffs Announces $1 Billion Middletown Works Investment to be Supported by $500 Million U.S. Department of Energy Award

Cliffs to Host Vice President J.D. Vance and Other Dignitaries at Middletown Works to Commemorate the Investment

CLEVELAND--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Cleveland-Cliffs Inc. **(NYSE: CLF)** (“Cliffs”) today announced that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has established a framework for Cliffs to finalize negotiations and implementation plans for its Middletown Works investment, rescoping the previously awarded $500 million DOE grant. The optimization project represents a $1 billion total investment in Middletown Works, with funding shared equally between Cleveland-Cliffs and the DOE. The investment is expected to be deployed over the next four years as the Company executes on these improvements while maintaining uninterrupted steel production.

Vice President J.D. Vance will visit the Company's Middletown Works steel plant today in his hometown of Middletown, Ohio, to deliver remarks highlighting the investment and accomplishments of the Trump Administration’s America First economic agenda. U.S. Secretary of Energy Christopher Wright will also participate along with numerous federal and state elected leaders from Ohio.

Middletown Works is Cleveland-Cliffs’ flagship plant to produce automotive-grade steels, particularly suited to exposed parts of cars, trucks and SUVs. The Middletown Works investment includes state-of-the-art upgrades to its blast furnace, advanced material handling infrastructure, and artificial intelligence-enabled process control technologies. A key component of the project is the construction of an advanced cogeneration facility that will capture and utilize blast furnace gas to generate electricity and steam for on-site consumption. This will improve overall energy efficiency, reduce reliance on externally supplied electricity, and lower operating costs. This multi-year investment is expected to commence in the coming weeks, with completion of the blast furnace rebuild planned for the first quarter of 2030.

Lourenco Goncalves, Cliffs’ Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, said: "Cleveland-Cliffs is making a decisive investment in the future of American steelmaking and manufacturing, going above and beyond a standard blast furnace reline, to include the most advanced technology available. Through our cooperation with President Trump’s Administration and the U.S. Department of Energy, we developed a project reliant on proven technology that improves operational efficiency and competitiveness. The DOE’s support for this project is a testament to the importance of preserving the blast furnace route to produce automotive-exposed grade steels in the U.S., while advancing American energy dominance. We thank President Trump, Vice President Vance, and Secretary Wright for their partnership. This investment strengthens domestic steelmaking, preserves 2,300 jobs and ensures that Middletown Works remains one of the premier steelmaking facilities in North America for decades to come."

At peak construction, the project will employ more than 1,500 workers including local union building trades. Middletown Works currently produces approximately 3 million tons of raw steel annually. The optimization project will preserve the facility's steelmaking capacity while substantially improving operational reliability, productivity, energy efficiency, and cost competitiveness.

About Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.

Cleveland-Cliffs is a leading North America-based steel producer with focus on value-added sheet products, particularly for the automotive industry. The Company is vertically integrated from the mining of iron ore, production of pellets and direct reduced iron, and processing of ferrous scrap through primary steelmaking and downstream finishing, stamping, tooling, and tubing. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, Cleveland-Cliffs employs approximately 25,000 people across its operations in the United States and Canada.

Forward-Looking Statements

This release contains statements that constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the federal securities laws. As a general matter, forward-looking statements relate to anticipated trends and expectations rather than historical matters. Forward-looking statements are subject to uncertainties and factors relating to our operations and business environment that are difficult to predict and may be beyond our control. Such uncertainties and factors may cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. These statements speak only as of the date of this release, and we undertake no ongoing obligation, other than that imposed by law, to update these statements. Investors are cautioned not to place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Uncertainties and risk factors that could affect our future performance and cause results to differ from the forward-looking statements in this release include, but are not limited to: our ability to successfully complete the optimization and modernization project at our Middletown Works steel plant, including within the expected timeframe; continued volatility of steel, scrap metal and iron ore market prices, which directly and indirectly impact the prices of the products that we sell to our customers; uncertainties associated with the highly competitive and cyclical steel industry and our reliance on the demand for steel from the automotive industry; potential weaknesses and uncertainties in global economic conditions, excess global steelmaking capacity and production, prevalence of steel imports and reduced market demand; risks related to U.S. and Canadian government actions and other countries' reactions with respect to Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (as amended by the Trade Act of 1974), the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement and/or other trade agreements, tariffs, treaties or policies, as well as the uncertainty of obtaining and maintaining effective antidumping and countervailing duty orders to counteract the harmful effects of unfairly traded imports; challenges to successfully implementing our business strategy to achieve operating results in line with our guidance; and the risk factors included in Part I, Item 1A. Risk Factors of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2025, and other filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

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