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"Quality of Life through Community, Industry, Environment, Recreation, Education".

"Home to the cleanest freshwater in Minnesota"

January 16, 2022

David Radford, Deputy State Director of Geospatial Services
U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office
RE: Superior National Forest Withdrawal Application
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22041

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MGMT
EASTERN STATES OFFICE
2022 JAN 26 A 10:52

VIA Email: BLM_ES_LANDS@blm.gov and USPS

Dear Mr. Radford,

As mayors of Minnesota's Iron Range, we are writing to you today in vehement opposition to the proposed withdrawal of 225,000 acres of lands and minerals from future exploration and projects in Minnesota in the Superior National Forest. We further oppose any attempts to take away the mineral rights permits from Twin Metals which have served decades of U.S. presidents from both political parties. Our legislative and regulatory bodies have developed some of the most stringent regulations in the country and world. Our cities, our region, the state of Minnesota, as well as our nation, benefit immensely from the mining we do here on the Iron Range. The damage this withdrawal would do to our economy, our citizens AND the environment would be catastrophic. We call for a stop to these political games that are causing continuous delays as well as uncertainty for our region and we ask for a true study of each mine plan rather than a short term generic study.

We are submitting to the record this letter along with a resolution endorsed by this group of mayors representing the great people of Northeast Minnesota. As you may recall, it is the communities we represent that agreed to the very creation of the Boundary Waters Wilderness area (BWCA) with the promise that the land outside the BWCA, and outside of the Federal and State Buffer zones, would continue to be used for mining and forestry. In fact, these very lands are designated as land where mining is a "desired activity" and a region our regulators are charged with actively developing. To pull the rug out from under us now is to break a promise we all take very seriously.

In addition, the ONLY way to properly determine whether or not specific projects can meet or exceed environmental regulations is to study the science of those SPECIFIC projects. A generic study tells us nothing; it will, by definition, be incomplete. It is politically motivated and a slap in the face to our citizens and our environment.

Furthermore, if we are on the cusp of a new, greener economy, virtually all of the metals

Iron Range Mayors:

Aitkin Megan Workman · Aurora Doug Gregor · Babbitt Andrea Zupancich · Biwabik Jim Weikum · Bovey Robert Stein
Buhl John Klarich · Calumet John Tuorila · Chisholm John Champa · Cohasset Greg Hagy · Coleraine Tom Nielsen
Cook Harold Johnston · Crosby Diane Nash · Ely Roger Skraba · Eveleth Bob Vlaisavljevich · Floodwood Tad Farrell
Gilbert Karl Oberstar Jr. · Grand Rapids Dale Christy · Hibbing Rick Cannata · Hill City Lonnie Lee · Hoyt Lakes Chris Vreeland
International Falls Harley Droba · Keewatin Michael LaBine · Kinney Mike Dahl · La Prairie Jonathan Bolen · Littlefork Mike
Fort Marble Daidre Breen · McGregor Dale Olson · McKinley Tony Nygaard · Mt. Iron Peggy Anderson Nashwauk Calvin Saari
Orr Joel Astleford · Ranier Dennis Wagner · Silver Bay Wade LeBlanc · Taconite Ryan Troumbly
Tower David Setterberg · Two Harbors Chris Swanson · Virginia Larry Cuffe

essential to products like solar modules, electric vehicles, windmills, batteries and so many other products exist in abundance right here in Northeast Minnesota where we do mining right and have for all of our existence.

The state of Minnesota and the Federal Government, through the BLM, have some of the most robust environmental permitting requirements in the world. But they CANNOT be politicized like we are seeing here. Good projects MUST be allowed to efficiently go through the permitting process and the science needs to determine whether or not they can be permitted for operation in an environmentally sound way.

We, the mayors of Northeast Minnesota, are watching closely to make sure politics is not being played with our workforce, livelihoods, or environment. Watching the first of the three open comment periods online, we witnessed most of the proponents of withdrawing our land from production came from the Twin Cities, California, New York and other areas. Support for science and the process and for allowing companies to mine here comes from those places too, but the overwhelming number of folks who were able to speak in opposition to this withdrawal came from right here in our back yard.

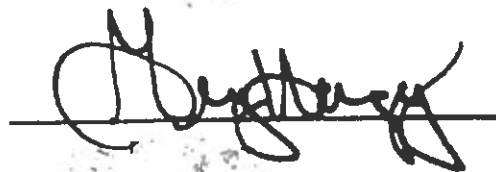
Please reject this outrageous withdrawal, allow Twin Metals to exercise their permits, and let's get back to the business of studying the specific projects and doing a serious, project-by-project Environmental Impact examination where we can truly understand the science and ramifications or benefits from these mining projects.

Sincerely,

Iron Range Mayors



Doug Gregor, City of Aurora



Greg Hagy, City of Cohasset



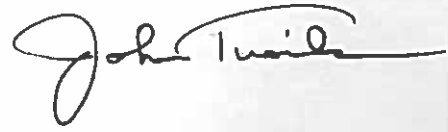
Andrea Zupancich, City of Babbitt



Larry Cuffe, City of Virginia



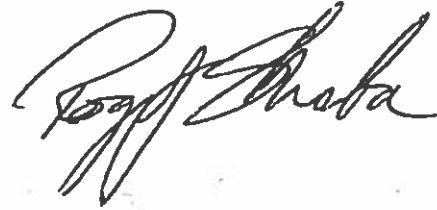
John Klarich, City of Buhl



John Tourila, City of Calumet



John Champa, City of Chisholm



Roger Skraba, City of Ely



Tom Nielsen, City of Coleraine



Karl Oberstar, Jr., City of Gilbert



Bob Vlasisavljevich, City of Eveleth



Dale Christy, City of Grand Rapids



Rick Cannata, City of Hibbing



Chris Vreeland, City of Hoyt Lakes



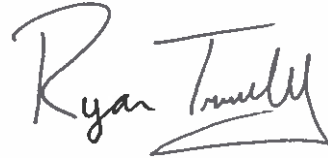
Peggy Anderson, City of Mt. Iron



Calvin Saari, City of Nashwauk



Jim Weikum, City of Biwabik



Ryan Troumbly, City of Taconite



Robert Stein, City of Bovey



Wade LeBlanc, City of Silver Bay



Megan Workman, City of Aitkin

/s/

Tad Farrell, City of Floodwood

The RANGE MAYORS are duly elected officials of 32 communities located in Northeastern Minnesota representing 78,000 residents. As mayors we feel compelled to speak out on issues of regional importance and impact as we battle every day to manage our city budgets, provide necessary essential services to our communities and grow our economy for a stronger region for tomorrow.

WHEREAS, nonferrous metals including nickel, cobalt, copper, platinum and palladium are essential to our everyday lives and are used in countless products including medical devices, cell phones and computers; and

WHEREAS, these metals will continue to play an ever-increasing role of importance as the use of renewable energy technologies grows in Minnesota, the United States and the world and are vital for manufacturing solar panels and wind turbines; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 Minnesota adopted California's Low-Emission Vehicle and Zero-Emission Vehicle standards, mandating that beginning in 2024 passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks be California certified which will require increased production of electric vehicles to meet these requirements; and

WHEREAS, nickel and cobalt and other nonferrous metals are key elements of electric vehicle batteries; and

WHEREAS, in May 2021 President Biden announced his intention to import critical minerals for electric vehicles from foreign nations, reducing the United States' independence, security, and economic expansion; and

WHEREAS, the United States is already facing significant supply chain issues and economic challenges due to the COVID-19 virus; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota's Duluth Complex contains 95% of the nation's nickel, 88% of the cobalt, 54% of the platinum, 48% of the palladium and 34% of the copper; and

WHEREAS, the Twin Metals Minnesota (TMM) project will employ an electric vehicle fleet, significantly reducing its onsite greenhouse gas emissions by 65% and building on its reputation as the most sustainable and technologically advanced underground mining project; and

WHEREAS, the Twin Metals Minnesota (TMM) project will utilize the dry stacking method of storing filtered tailings, which is the most sustainable and environmentally-conscious method available, and

WHEREAS, dry stack tailings are compacted in a mound that is reclaimed with native soil and vegetation, circumventing the need for a dam to hold them in place, ensuring no possibility of dam failure and no long-term storage issues; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has just begun its review of the TMM project plan for completeness, followed by an extensive, multi-year environmental impact review of the specific project before it; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government is now proposing to withdraw 225,000 acres of lands and minerals from future exploration and projects in Minnesota on property that local citizens were promised would be designated as focused and desirable lands for mining projects; and

WHEREAS, unlawfully taking Mineral Leases, proceeding with this federal withdrawal and generic study is harmful to our local communities, economy AND environment; and

WHEREAS, the only way to determine the environmental impact of specific mine plans of operations is to study those specific mine plans of operations in the context of environmental permitting:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RANGE MAYORS OF NORTHEAST MINNESOTA, the Range Mayors support the immediate elimination of the proposed 20-year moratorium and support the immediate return to the efficient science driven study of individual mining projects through our robust permitting process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Range Mayors group declares that it holds Minnesota's rich and abundant natural resources in the highest regard and seeks to preserve them for future generations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Range Mayors support the proposed Twin Metals Minnesota mining project and the continued investment in Greater Minnesota's economy, creating hundreds of jobs for our community's highly trained and skilled workers.