

January 17, 2022

Deb Haaland, Secretary
Department of Interior
1849C Street N.W.
Washington, D C 20240

F. David Radford
Deputy State Director of Geospatial Services
BLM 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 9:22

Re: Superior National Forest Withdrawal Application

Dear Secretary Haaland & Mr. Radford:

My name is Allan L. Monk. I am a senior citizen and a native Minnesotan. I have lived and worked on Minnesota's Iron Range since my graduation from Babbitt High School in 1977. I worked as a miner for Reserve Mining as did my now deceased father. I am employed today as an equipment operator by an excavating company based in Ely. The company performs work both for the mining companies and the general public, including home owners and home builders.

Since 2012, Twin Metals Minnesota has been planning to develop a copper- nickel mine in the Rainy River Watershed. Since that time, it has invested more than \$550 million dollars in the project, prospecting and preparing studies. When the necessary federal and state permits to mine have been obtained, Twin Metals will invest another \$1.7 billion dollars in the project to construct the mine. When fully operational, Twin Metals' mine will employ 750 union labor miners; another 1,500 jobs will be created in related industries.

Before banning mining activity in the Rainy River Watershed, the Biden Administration must consider the loss of well-paying jobs the people of Northeastern Minnesota depend upon to feed and provide health care for their families - to purchase homes and educate their children. Twin Metals' opponents claim that copper-nickel mining is not needed and that tourism will sustain the region's economy. Yet, tourism never has been, isn't now and never will be the driving force behind our economy. Tourism is seasonal, from mid-June to the Labor Day weekend.

A Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages in Northeast Minnesota by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development found that the annual wages paid a miner in 2019 was \$97,655, while the annual wages paid a person employed in the hospitality/tourism industry, was \$22,968. The annual wages paid in all industries was \$43,710.

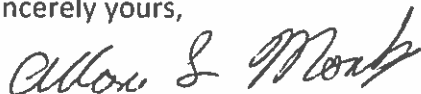
Taxes on minerals have supported Minnesota schools since the Minnesota School Trust Fund was established when Minnesota became a state. Mining royalties paid into the School

Trust Fund each year support 900,000 K-12 students enrolled in Minnesota school districts. The Biden Administration must also consider the impact a 20-year moratorium would have on the School Trust Fund. If a moratorium is imposed, the School Trust Fund will lose billions of dollars in royalties Twin Metals and other mining companies would have paid into the Fund.

A 20-year ban on mining in the Rainy River Watershed will damage and may kill the development of Twin Metals' mine and those of *Teck*, *Encampment Minerals* and *Vermillion Gold* – all of which are presently exploring for minerals in the Rainy River Watershed. Investment by businesses in new projects will then cease, our business communities will suffer, the population of our cities will continue to decline as well as k-12 enrollment in our schools.

For the foregoing reasons I strongly oppose the withdrawal of 225,000 acres of U. S. Forest lands in the Rainy River Watershed of the Superior National Forest for two years, from operation of the United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws, and the imposition of a 20-year moratorium on those lands by the Biden Administration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allan L. Monk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Allan" and last name "Monk" clearly distinguishable.

Allan L. Monk
9726 Highway 22
Angora, MN 55732