



January 11, 2017

Secretary Sally Jewell  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Secretary Tom Vilsack  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave. S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Jewell:

As elected leaders of the Minnesota Legislature, we are writing to express our outrage at the recent politically-driven decisions issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) related to mineral development in Northeast Minnesota. Initiating actions to withdraw nearly 240,000 acres of federal lands and minerals from future exploration and potential development and denying the renewal of 50-year federal mineral leases held by Twin Metals Minnesota are onerous decisions that will cause devastating and irreversible damage to the citizens, communities and economy of the region. We seek your immediate reconsideration and reversal of these actions, and urge you to refocus your agencies on the proper tasks of accepting and assessing mining project proposals under the regulatory procedures established by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other related federal statutes.

Prohibiting future mineral exploration and development over 240,000 additional acres of federal lands will have sweeping negative impacts for the not just the precious metals industry, but the entire region of Northeast Minnesota as well. Beyond any one particular project this action will harm a wide array of technology, infrastructure and manufacturing industries, especially the rapidly growing green and renewable energy sectors. Independent economic analysis from the University of Minnesota-Duluth estimates more than 12,000 construction jobs and 5,000 long-term mining jobs would be created if the projects currently under various stages of development in this region came to fruition. Even beyond those direct employment opportunities, research projects nearly a 3:1 ratio of supplemental jobs created. This would represent a significant beacon of hope for one of the most economically distressed regions in our nation. Further, the estimated four billion ton deposit of copper, nickel and other strategic minerals located within the Duluth Complex stand to potentially generate nearly \$3 billion in royalty revenues for the state's Permanent School Trust Fund – resources that would support the education of nearly 900,000 K-12 students statewide. These are the enormous economic opportunities and educational responsibilities that will be lost under your agencies' misguided and politically motivated anti-mining decisions.



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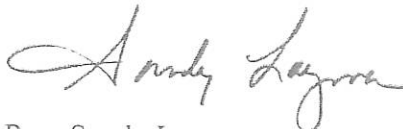
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