November 28, 2017

ATTN: Rep. Rick Nolan: c/o Jeff Anderson & Will Mitchell
RE: In Support of H.R. 3905: "Minnesota's Economic Rights (MINER) Act"

Dear Congressman Nolan,

APEX is a member-driven, private-sector led, economic development organization dedicated to attracting, expanding and retaining business in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. APEX business and economic development efforts focus in areas including aviation, technology, manufacturing, professional services, transportation and next generation forest products. Since 2003, APEX has impacted over 4,020 jobs in the region, resulting in a regional payroll of over $164 million and contributing to over $22 million in state and local taxes annually. Funded by nearly 80 our region's largest private businesses, APEX works diligently behind the scenes every day to support the success of regional businesses, providing strategic input, addressing marketing challenges, and helping businesses assess site selection options. Together with our investor-members and economic development partners, we work to foster an innovative, highly-competitive business where companies can thrive.

From this description, it is evident why APEX is writing this letter to support H.R. 3905, the "Minnesota's Economic Rights (MINER) in the Superior National Forest Act," a bipartisan legislation sponsored by Cong. Tom Emmer (MN-6th) and cosponsored by Cong. Collin Peterson (MN-7th), Cong. Jason Lewis (MN-2nd) and Cong. Paul Gosar (AZ-4th). H.R. 3905.

In 1950, Congress took action to make land available for mineral exploration and development within the Superior National Forest (SNF) within the Iron Range region in Northeast Minnesota. In 1978, Congress prohibited mining within the region's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and an adjacent protective buffer zone, while reaffirming that mining should be allowed and promoted in the remaining area of the SNF.

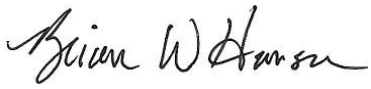
Unfortunately, the economic future of the region is now threatened by federal agency actions initiated in December 2016 that would cancel valid, long-standing federal mineral leases and withdraw 235,000 acres of federal land in the region from future mining development, contrary to the previous directives by Congress. If allowed to stand, these agency actions will eliminate the possible creation of thousands of good-paying jobs, billions of dollars in economic growth, and billions more in revenues for Minnesota's public schools through mineral development on state school trust lands.

H.R. 3905 aims to correct the injustices being thrust upon the Iron Range by requiring congressional approval of any mineral withdrawal or monument designation involving the National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota, as well as providing for the renewal of certain mineral leases and ensuring future leases in the area remain valid and renewed as outlined by current law. Moreover, H.R. 3905 changes no environmental review processes, relaxes no environmental standards, and specifically restates Congress' prohibition on any mining activity in the BWCAW and surrounding protective buffer.

H.R. 3905 would reaffirm long-standing Congressional intent in the management and development of critical minerals in Minnesota, eliminate bureaucratic delays in developing environmentally-responsible mine project proposals, and restore the promise of future job growth and economic opportunity to an economically distressed region of the state. We strongly urge your vote in support of H.R 3905.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian W. Hanson
President & CEO
APEX (Area Partnership for Economic Expansion)