



The Honorable Erik Paulsen
Minnesota Congressional District 3
United States Congress
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Paulsen,

My name is Arik Forsman. I live in Duluth, MN and represent a volunteer organization called Better In Our Back Yard. I am writing to urge your support for H.R. 3905, the “Minnesota’s Economic Rights (MINER) in the Superior National Forest Act,” bipartisan legislation sponsored by Cong. Tom Emmer (MN-6th) and co-sponsored by Cong. Collin Peterson (MN-7th), Cong. Jason Lewis (MN-2nd) and Cong. Paul Gosar (AZ-4th). H.R. 3905 is currently on the agenda of the House Rules Committee, on a path for House floor action in the coming weeks.

Better In Our Back Yard is a coalition of dedicated young and emerging local professionals who understand responsible industry drives our primary economy in Northeastern Minnesota. We are engineers, project managers, sales executives, small business owners, and economic developers who care about our region. Unfortunately, the economic future of our region is currently under attack. Federal actions taken in 2016 threaten the cancellation of federal mineral leases, the economic viability of our future economy, and the promise of a better tomorrow. These actions could kill off thousands of potential good paying, family raising jobs - the types of jobs our kids could one day aspire to hold to raise families of their own; the types of jobs that restore hope to communities with empty shops, shrinking classrooms, and silent playgrounds.

It is our belief that these actions were primarily taken out of fear from the potential effects of copper/nickel mining in our back yard. Fear is an unstable foundation upon which to build public policy. No mine plan has been proposed, and no permitting has begun, which means the premature cancellation of leases in the largest untapped copper/nickel deposit in the world took place before anyone could rationally judge whether specific mining projects could be done safely. If the regulatory process proves a project can’t do so, then we won’t support it. That’s because we believe in balance, common sense environmental regulations, and a rigorous permitting process. The reality is that the MINER Act gives us a shot at restoring all of these attributes to our regulatory environment.

We’re proud to have grown up in a state that protects our clean water, air, and environment. We trust our regulators will ensure it remains that way alongside any potential new mines. H.R. 3905 changes no environmental review processes and specifically restates the prohibition on any mining activity in the BWCAW that we all enjoy. It just gives us a shot at billions of dollars in economic development and the potential for folks in our region to realize the American dream.

We at Better In Our Back Yard strongly urge your vote in support of H.R 3905. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Arik Forsman
Duluth, MN