

President Joseph Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Secretary Tom Vilsack  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
STOP 0506  
Washington, DC, 20250-0506

The Honorable Secretary Deb Haaland  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW, MS 5311  
Washington, DC 20240

***SENT VIA E-MAIL***

October 22, 2021

Dear President Biden, Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland,

We are writing today on behalf of the membership of the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) to express our extreme disappointment with your decision this week to halt any new leases or permits in the Rainy River watershed in Minnesota. We are an organization made up of townships, municipalities, and schools across northern Minnesota representing 78,000 residents. We have been mining in northern Minnesota for over 130 years – in the Rainy River watershed and Lake Superior watershed. We have done this while protecting our water, air, and precious natural environment.

Northeastern Minnesota is proudly the Iron Mining Capitol of the United States. Over 85% of all domestic iron ore mining takes place on the Iron Range, employing thousands with good paying jobs. We have stringent environmental regulations in place in Minnesota and we arguably produce the world's cleanest steel due to these environmental regulations. As you know, Twin Metals submitted a plan to mine in December 2019. This mine plan needs to be thoroughly studied and reviewed prior to any permit to mine. We believe the current process in place ensures that mining will only be permitted if it meets these ridged environmental standards.

In regard to our nation's impact on climate, we agree with your goals that our country needs to reduce its impact. But we also know that what happens globally affects us locally. If we are importing these minerals and the products that these minerals go into, we are turning a blind eye to the source and arguably allowing pollution and environmental degradation in other areas of the globe, not to mention forced labor. Our nation needs these minerals for electric vehicles, for batteries, for wind energy, and even for our solar modules that are being produced domestically right here in northern Minnesota in Mountain Iron in our state's only solar manufacturer. Our country can't move forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without these minerals and we

***"One Range...One Voice"***

believe it is shortsighted and even dangerous to rely on importing these materials. If we can mine these minerals safely here in Minnesota, we should.

In the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, Congress declared that it is the continuing policy of the federal government to foster and encourage private investment in the development of domestic mineral resources. The U.S. Forest Service has recognized the importance of National Forest System mineral resources to the well-being of our nation and has encouraged mineral exploration and development. Our country is the number one consumer of these minerals. We need to do what it takes to mine them responsibly here in the United States. As the people who live in or near the Rainy River watershed, we believe your actions are short sighted, duplicative and unnecessary. We urge you to reconsider this decision and support responsible mining.

Sincerely,

RAMS Board of Directors



Charlie Baribeau, President  
Virginia City Council



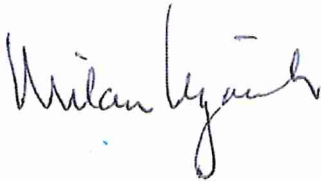
Cyndi Worshek, Vice President  
Mesabi East School Board, ISD #2711



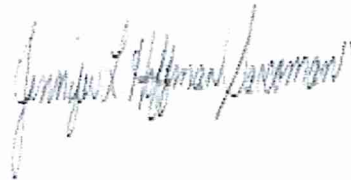
Barb Kalmi, Secretary/Treasurer  
Nashwauk Keewatin School Board, ISD #319



Pat Medure  
Grand Rapids School Board, ISD #318



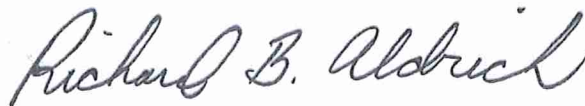
Milan Luzaich  
Great Scott Town Board



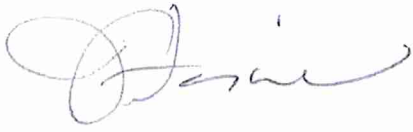
Jennifer Saccoman-Hoffman  
Hibbing City Council



Stuart Lehman  
Buhl City Council



Richard Aldrich  
Supt, Hibbing, ISD #701



Jim Fisher  
McDavitt Town Board



Paul Kess  
Ely City Council



Shane Hoff  
Silver Bay City Council



Dr. Noel Schmidt  
Supt, Rock Ridge, ISD #2909



Bob Berrini  
Morse Town Board



Ronald Pittman  
Cherry Town Board



Stacey Sundquist  
Virginia School Board, ISD #706



Dave Worshek  
Aurora City Council



Kim McLaughlin  
Hibbing School Board, ISD #701



John Champa  
Mayor, City of Chisholm



Dale Adams  
Grand Rapids City Council



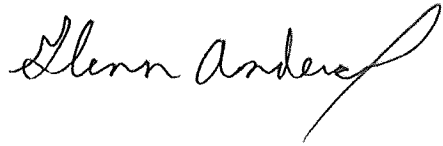
David Zins  
Hoyt Lakes City Council



Warren Stolp  
Nashwauk Town Board



Calvin Saari  
Mayor, City of Nashwauk



Glenn Anderson  
Babbitt City Council

cc: United States Senator Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator Tina Smith  
U.S. Representative Pete Stauber  
Governor Tim Walz, Minnesota  
U.S. Representative Dean Phillips  
U.S. Representative Angie Craig  
U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm  
U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo

***Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS)*** *The organization represents more than 78,000 residents and 57 public sector units of government, including 27 cities, 15 public school districts and 16 townships in the 13,000 square mile Taconite Assistance Area (TAA) of northeast Minnesota. As an organization, RAMS has represented the interests of the Iron Range region for over 80 years.*