



*RESOLUTION 01-2022—OPPOSITION TO FEDERAL BILL H.R. 2794
“BOUNDARY WATERS WILDERNESS PROTECTION AND POLLUTION
PREVENTION ACT”*

WHEREAS, the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) represents over 75,000 residents who call the Taconite Assistance Area (TAA) their home and where iron ore and taconite mining has been occurring since 1884 (Soudan Underground Mine, Vermilion Iron Range) without any significant environmental catastrophes, and

WHEREAS, the families and workers who have mined minerals in this region for over 130 years take great pride in our history of mining, technology advancements, and have helped forge an identity as a “global mining center of excellence”, and

WHEREAS, Minnesota has some of the most stringent environmental standards, permitting and monitoring requirements required of every mining operation regardless of the mineral being mined, and

WHEREAS, Minnesota has some of the richest mineral deposits found anywhere in the world and those minerals have proven to be instrumental in helping our country win two world wars and are still critical to our national defense, as well as for uses in the health industry, green economy, technology industries and used in everyday applications by millions of people around the globe, and

WHEREAS, Minnesota has a mineral policy (MN Statute 93.001) that states, *“It is the policy of the state to provide for the diversification of the state’s mineral economy through long-term support of mineral exploration, evaluation, environmental research, development, production and commercialization”*, and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota legislature has adapted the “Goal of the Permanent School Fund” (MN Statute 127A.31) which states, *“The legislature intends that it is the goal of the permanent school fund to secure the maximum long-term economic return from the school trust lands consistent with the fiduciary responsibilities imposed by the trust relationship established in the Minnesota Constitution, with sound natural resource conservation and management principles, and with other specific policy provided in state law”*, and

WHEREAS, H.R. 2794 requires the federal government to withdraw all Federal land within the Rainy River Watershed in Minnesota from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under

the public land laws, location entry and patent under the mining laws, and operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws, and

WHEREAS, The Rainy River Watershed encompasses 11,244 square miles in Minnesota that includes an estimated 1.3 million acres of state School Trust Fund minerals, and

WHEREAS, studies conducted by the University of Minnesota Duluth has projected that mineral mining in the Rainy River Watershed could contribute upwards of \$2.5 billion after 10 years of mining operations to the state School Trust Fund, thereby providing an incredible increase in the fund and annual allotments to our school districts and the University of Minnesota, and

WHEREAS, the economic impact to the Iron Range has been estimated at \$1.5 billion in annual wages with nearly 5,000 jobs created and over 12,000 construction jobs provided prior to the mining operations, and

WHEREAS, science and technology are constantly improving the mining of base and precious metals and all environmental standards, permits, and quality control as well as mine reclamation and performance bonds will be adhered to by any and all new mining operations in the Rainy River Watershed, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest Service has specifically designated mining as a desired activity in areas of the Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness currently in law has a dedicated protective buffer zone surrounding it, and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has invoked the Defense Production Act in March of 2022 to secure reliable supply chains for the critical minerals we need that are essential to a clean energy transition and essential to our country's national defense, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED the RAMS board of directors does not support the passage of H.R. 2794 as written and does stand in support of the allowance of base mineral mining in the Rainy River Watershed in conjunction with existing permitting, environmental review processes, operating mine monitoring and compliance as well as the issuance of reclamation and performance bonds that will assure the protection of our precious natural resources as well as the back yards of the residents of this remarkable region known as northeastern Minnesota.



Pat Medure, President



Barb Kalmi, Secretary-Treasurer

Approved by the board on a unanimous vote May 26, 2022