

May 02, 2025

U.S. House Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Committee Members:



On behalf of Better In Our Back Yard, I am writing in strong support of Section 80131, Superior National Forest Lands in Minnesota, of the House Natural Resources reconciliation package released this week. This area of northeast Minnesota contains the world's largest undeveloped resources of copper, nickel, cobalt, platinum group metals and more – all resources vital to bolstering American energy and national security. Several of our member companies are pursuing responsible development of the resources.

Better In Our Back Yard advocates for responsible industrial development across the nation. We believe mining can be done better in the United States than anywhere else, because we have the highest environmental and labor standards in the world. Several of our member companies in Minnesota have faced significant setbacks as a result of the Biden Administration enacting a mining ban across 225,000 acres of federal land in 2023, in addition to cancelling federal mineral rights.

Mining projects in this area have a unique ability to produce income for the federal government through the taxes and royalties generated from federal mineral leases under Minnesota's modernized leasing system. They will also contribute significant funds to the state of Minnesota through royalties, taxes and contributions to the Permanent School Fund, which supports K-12 education across the state.

The Department of the Interior's (DOI) cancellation of federal mineral rights and enactment of a mineral withdrawal in northeast Minnesota has been detrimental to the mining companies proposing to sustainably mine our region's resources. It has also harmed local communities in this area that have experienced significant economic decline for decades.

Minnesota has the ability to become a critical mineral powerhouse for the U.S., with resources that will support generations of mining. Overturning the mineral withdrawal and restoring federal mineral rights in northeast Minnesota is a critical step in ensuring these minerals can be developed here in the U.S. under our high regulatory standards. If passed into law, the language in the reconciliation package does not mean that mining begin immediately, but rather, it will allow project proposers the opportunity to have their projects reviewed through the robust regulatory processes under state and federal agencies.

More broadly, Minnesota's mining projects are vital for our nation to achieve the administration's goals of bolstering national security, bringing more manufacturing home, creating good paying American jobs and becoming energy independent. It's a win for the administration and for Minnesota.

Best regards,

Ryan Sistad  
Executive Director  
Better in Our Back Yard