



Testimony for the Record
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
Legislative Hearing on H. Con. Res. 34 and H.R. ____,
“Superior National Forest Restoration Act”
May 11, 2023

The National Mining Association (NMA) supports the concurrent resolution expressing disapproval of the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) January 26, 2023, withdrawal of more than 225,000 acres (88 FR 6308) of highly mineralized lands in Northern Minnesota and the Superior National Forest Restoration Act being considered at today’s Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources hearing. Ensuring access to our federal lands for responsible mineral exploration and development is critical to supplying the essential materials necessary for nearly every sector of our economy.

Northern Minnesota is a place of tremendous natural beauty and is also blessed with worldclass mineral deposits containing copper, nickel and essential metals that are vital for U.S. economic and national security priorities. In fact, this area contains the largest undeveloped deposits of nickel, copper and platinum metals in the world. Despite these abundant resources, the U.S. continues to be increasingly reliant on foreign sources of metals and minerals, including from geopolitical adversaries that do not share our values when it comes to environmental, labor and safety standards.

The Biden administration’s self-sabotage of domestic mineral supply chains through mineral withdrawals is completely out of step with the dramatic increase in minerals production that is needed in the coming decades to keep up with new technologies, infrastructure and manufacturing needs, let alone the administration’s energy transition goals. Instead of ceding our nation’s mineral supply chain security to other countries, the U.S. should utilize its world-class environmental standards to ensure we need not choose between mining and environmental protection.

Today’s legislation supports responsible mineral exploration and development in an area specifically designated and set aside by Congress and the U.S. Forest Service for such activities. The administration’s actions continue a dangerous trend of politicizing domestic mineral supply chains first initiated in the waning days of the Obama administration. Continuing to pursue dangerous policies that

lock up federal lands with high mineral potential will both sterilize future mineral development in this region, and deny the hard-working men and women of Northern Minnesota the opportunity of high-paying jobs – all, while erasing significant revenues to Minnesota’s rural communities that come from these projects in the form of taxes and royalties that support schools and regional development projects.

Currently, less than half of the mineral needs of U.S. manufacturing are met by domestically mined minerals. Today’s legislation will help change this alarming trajectory by ensuring access to our nation’s vast mineral endowment.

The NMA urges continued trust of our nation’s strong environmental regulations and system of due process to strengthen a reliable and stable domestic mineral supply chain for the future.