



September 10, 2024

Chairman Westerman and Members of the House of Representatives:

On behalf of the Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX), I am writing to express our strong support for your legislation aimed at improving the permitting of projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). APEX is a private sector-led business development engine established to promote sustainable growth in Northeast Minnesota and Northwest Wisconsin. APEX investor-members represent many of the largest and most influential organizations with a vested interest in driving progress and economic vitality.

This legislation would have a positive impact on several major proposed copper-nickel mining projects in our region through improved transparency and efficiency in the federal permitting process. Our communities in Northeast Minnesota will benefit from these projects through new investment, new business and job opportunities, improving areas challenged by economic decline in recent years.

The copper-nickel mining projects in our region are essential to meeting our nation's goals of bolstering domestic supplies of critical minerals.

Permitting reform is urgently needed to ensure proposed projects are reviewed in a timely and coordinated manner while simultaneously upholding our strong environmental standards essential to the prosperity and safety of future generations.

Our region can play a key leadership role in the development of these natural resources and innovative new industries in the clean energy economy value chain.

In conclusion, as a collaborative, solutions-orientated organization, APEX fully supports your proposed NEPA reform legislation, as it will benefit our investor-member companies and communities. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions related to the support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel A. Johnson".

Rachel Johnson
President & CEO APEX
306 West Superior Street, Suite 902, Duluth, MN 55804
Phone: 218-740-3667