



September 10th, 2024

Chairman Westerman and Members of the House of Representatives:

I'm writing on behalf of Better In Our Back Yard to support your proposed legislation to improve project permitting under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Better In Our Back Yard is a coalition of dedicated leaders who understand that responsible industry creates a thriving economy.

Permitting reform is crucial for unlocking economic prosperity in northeast Minnesota and throughout the U.S. The country stands on the brink of another industrial revolution, but progress is stalled by unnecessary legal challenges from project opponents, who use them as delay tactics, harming our regional economy and quality of life.

Minnesota's Iron Range hosts several key copper-nickel projects managed by responsible and reputable companies that have spent decades navigating the appropriately rigorous permitting process. However, these companies continue to face unwarranted setbacks and delays in the federal environmental review and permitting procedures. According to a recent S&P Global report, it takes an average of 29 years to permit a mine after discovering a resource. This lengthy process should be an embarrassment to policymakers on the global stage.

The legislation you've proposed would positively impact several major proposed copper-nickel mining projects in our region by adding transparency and improving efficiencies in the federal permitting process. Our local communities are counting on these projects to bring significant economic contributions and job opportunities to areas of Minnesota that have been in economic decline for decades.

Thank you for proposing much-needed changes to ensure these problems no longer persist. Better in Our Back Yard and our members want to see proposed projects reviewed efficiently and fairly while also adhering to Minnesota's strong environmental standards. We support statewide and national clean energy goals, and we know a cleaner and more sustainable future is only possible through responsible domestic mining. A more fair and efficient federal permitting process is critical.

Better in Our Back Yard believes there is no better place than here, right in our backyard, to lead the world in responsible mineral procurement, and we are pleased to lend our full support for your proposed NEPA reform legislation.

Thank you,

Ryan Sistasd
Executive Director
Better In Our Back Yard