

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS

LOCAL NO. 49, 49A, 49B, 49C, 49D, 49E, 49L
MINNESOTA • NORTH DAKOTA • SOUTH DAKOTA

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Chairman Westerman and Members of the House of Representatives:

On behalf of the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 49 (Local 49), 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). Local 49 is a construction labor union that represents over 15,000 heavy equipment operators, mechanics, and stationary engineers across Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota

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. The communities in northeast Minnesota stand to benefit from these projects through their ability to bring significant economic contributions and job opportunities to an area of Minnesota that has been in economic decline for decades. Yet, the companies proposing to responsibly bring these projects forward have faced a series of unnecessary setbacks and delays in the federal environmental review and permitting process.

Permitting reform is critically needed to ensure these problems no longer persist, and to ensure proposed projects are reviewed in a coordinated and efficient manner while simultaneously ensuring our strong environmental standards are met. These reforms will give projects the opportunity to prove that by using the most highly skilled workforce and cutting-edge technologies critical minerals can be safely and efficiently mined.

The copper-nickel mining projects in our region are essential to the revitalization of our local communities and to ensuring we meet our nation's goals of bolstering domestic supplies of critical minerals.

Therefore, we at Local 49 fully support your proposed NEPA reform legislation, as it would greatly benefit our member companies and communities.

Sincerely,

Jason A. George
Business Manager – Financial Secretary
International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 49