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September 9, 2024

Chairman Bruce Westerman
House Natural Resources Committee

Dear Chairman Westerman and Members of the House of Representatives:

On behalf of the Ely Area Development Association and Up North Jobs Inc., I write to document the record and to express our strong support for your legislation to improve the permitting of projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Both of the nonprofit organizations of which I serve as President and CEO, promote job growth and economic development in Northeastern Minnesota. The Ely Area Development Association was first chartered in 1959 and was responsible for the development of numerous Ely projects. Up North Jobs is a 10-year-old membership organization with more than 4,000 company and individual members and supporters who financially support its activities and whom support the development of copper-nickel mining in the Rainy River Watershed of the Superior National Forest.

The aforementioned legislation would have a positive impact on several major copper-nickel mining projects proposed in our region by improving the transparency and efficiency in the federal permitting process. The communities in Northeastern Minnesota stand to benefit from these projects and would make significant economic contributions and provide important job opportunities in Northeastern Minnesota, where the economy has been in decline for decades. Yet, sadly, the companies proposing to develop these projects, have experienced decades of unnecessary setbacks and delays in the federal environmental review and permitting process.

Reforming the permitting process is urgently need to ensure these problems no longer persist, and to ensure that proposed projects are reviewed in a coordinated and efficient manner while simultaneously ensuring that tough environmental standards are met.

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

Therefore, the Ely Area Development Association, Up North Jobs, and its many members and supporters, fully support your proposed NEPA reform legislation, since it would greatly benefit our region's companies and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerald M. Tyler', is written over a horizontal line.

Gerald M. Tyler
President, Chairman and CEO