



**Range Association of
Municipalities and Schools**

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May 2, 2025

House Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chairman
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for Section 80131 – Superior National Forest Lands in Minnesota

Dear Chair Westerman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS), which represents 27 cities, 29 townships, and 15 school districts across 13,000 square miles in northeastern Minnesota, I write to express strong support for Section 80131, Superior National Forest Lands in Minnesota, included in the House Natural Resources Committee reconciliation package released this week.

For nearly a century, RAMS has advocated for the interests of communities impacted by mining in our region. Northeastern Minnesota contains the largest known undeveloped copper-nickel deposit in the world and significant helium reserves—critical minerals essential to national security, clean energy technology, and the resilience of domestic supply chains.

Restoring federal mineral rights and reversing the mineral withdrawal in this region is vital to allowing project proponents to responsibly pursue exploration and development. These provisions would not automatically greenlight mining activity but would simply allow proposed projects to be evaluated through a rigorous, science-based regulatory process.

The opportunity to develop these resources responsibly presents enormous potential for long-term economic development, family-supporting jobs, and local tax revenues that strengthen schools and municipal services across the Iron Range. This issue has been a longstanding priority for our region. In 2021, former RAMS Executive Director Ida Rukavina traveled to Washington, D.C., with regional partners to advocate for a fair and lawful path forward for projects within the Duluth Complex.

Section 80131 represents a meaningful step toward mineral diversification, national resource independence, and regional economic revitalization. We respectfully urge the Committee to retain this provision and support its adoption in the final reconciliation package.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Peltier
Executive Director
Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS)

