



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

May 20, 2022

The Honorable Alan Lowenthal
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Mineral Resources
House Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lowenthal:

Enclosed are responses prepared by the Department of the Interior to questions for the record submitted to Ms. Janea Scott following her November 16, 2021, appearance before the Subcommittee at a hearing on public lands and Renewable Energy Transmission Infrastructure. We apologize for the delay in our response.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this material to the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

Christopher P. Salotti
Legislative Counsel
Office of Congressional and
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Pete Stauber, Ranking Member

Committee on Natural Resources

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

Oversight Hearing: "Plugging in Public Lands: Transmission Infrastructure for Renewable Energy"

November 16, 2021

Questions from Rep. Pete Stauber

Question 1. Ms. Scott, as the Senior Counselor for the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals, how do you have no knowledge of the Duluth Complex when leases held by several companies are under the direct jurisdiction of your Department?

Response: I am aware of this matter not by the geologic structure underlying the area but by the general reference to the mine as the Twin Metals Mine, as well as the name of the subsidiary, Twin Metals Mining of the Chilean company Antofagasta, that is seeking authorization to carry out these activities. This matter is not an issue that falls within my regular portfolio of work and area of expertise, which is the development of renewable energy generation and transmission and that was the topic of this hearing.

Question 2. What other political appointees in the Office of Land and Minerals Management have no knowledge of North America's largest untapped copper-nickel deposit, where your department has significant jurisdiction?

Response: As I noted in the response to the previous question, I am generally aware of this matter not by the geologic structure underlying the area but by the general reference to the mine as the Twin Metals Mine, as well as the name of the subsidiary, Twin Metals Mining of the Chilean company Antofagasta, that is seeking authorization to carry out these activities. This matter does not fall within my regular portfolio of work and area of expertise, which was the topic of this hearing.

Question 3. Are you aware that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is beginning a two-year study that would lead to a mineral withdrawal, affecting the subsurface mineral rights governed by your Office of Land and Minerals Management?

Response: The Administration published a notice in the Federal Register on October 20, 2021, that initiates consideration of a 20-year withdrawal of key portions of the National Forest lands from disposition under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws. This action was taken in response to broad concerns about potential impacts of mining on the wilderness area's watershed, fish and wildlife, Tribal trust and treaty rights, and the nearly \$100 million annual local recreation economy.

Question 4. Can you provide the dates and times of any meetings you have taken or attended to discuss the Duluth Complex, Boundary Waters, or Superior National Forest since January 20, 2021 and the names of the attendees of each meeting?

Response: As I noted in a previous response this is not a matter that falls within my portfolio, which is the development of renewable energy generation and transmission and that was the topic of this hearing.

Committee on Natural Resources

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Question 5. In our hearing, you committed to providing us with your recusal list.

a. Please provide a copy of Ms. Janea Scott’s Ethics Guidance and Recusal Obligations and all related attachments including, but not limited to, List of Recusals and Quick Reference Chart, Ethics Pledge, and list of all ethics waivers granted, as well as a copy of Ms. Janea Scott’s Executive Branch Personnel Public Financial Disclosure Report (OGE FORM 278e).

Response: The Department’s Ethics Office responded to a similar request from Committee Ranking Member Westerman and Representatives Stauber and Moore in a letter dated May 20, 2022.