Ranking Member Grijalva - Opening Statement
Legislative Hearing on H.Con.Res 34 and the “Superior National Forest Restoration Act”
May 11, 2023

- **Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Ocasio-Cortez. And thank you to our witnesses for taking time out of your busy schedules to travel here today.**

- **Many of us here are very familiar with the fight over mining in the Boundary Waters watershed.**

- **We’ve been having hearings on this issue going back years. At this point, it should be settled, as the Ranking Member already stated.**

- **That’s because the Biden administration—unlike the previous administration—took the time and effort do the process right and landed on the decision to protect the Boundary Waters region from mining for the next 20 years.**

- **The decision was based on sound science, community input, robust tribal consultation, and, at the end of the day, the best interests of the American people.**

- **But Republicans don't like it. As they've made pretty clear this congress, their priority isn't science or protecting communities—their priority is putting the polluting industry above all, and using any means necessary to do so.**

- **That includes holding our entire economy hostage unless we pass their ransom note of extreme demands, including a long list of polluters over people policies.**

- **They've also taken to breaking long-established Committee norms.**

- **For instance, last week, the majority held a field hearing in Minnesota, the home state of the Boundary Waters, to discuss mining.**

- **As Chair Stauber mentioned at the field hearing, he was disappointed that the minority didn't attend.**

- **But I would like to remind him that they gave us only a little over a week's notice.**

- **When Democrats held the majority, we often gave the minority a month's notice or more to make sure they could plan to attend.**

- **And community members noticed – press coverage after the hearing called out the fact that it was not a balanced discussion.**

- **The hearing was supposedly an opportunity to hear from the community, but they certainly didn't want to hear from everyone.**

- **Notably not on the witness list were the Chippewa Bands, whose lands and waters would be most impacted by mining pollution.**

- **And of course, there was no testimony from any of the 70 percent of Minnesotans who are in favor of Boundary Waters protections.**

- **I find it hard to believe that leaving these stakeholders out of the conversation was an accidental oversight.**

- **And now, with today's hearing, my colleagues across the aisle are resorting to unconstitutional bills to get their industry-driven agenda across the finish line.**

- **For a party that claims to be all about process, there seems to be a lot of finding ways to get around the rules.**

- **By contrast, the mineral withdrawal we're discussing today is squarely within the administration's authority, and they followed all proper procedures to do it.**

- **My colleagues say that the mining industry needs certainty – well this is certainty, the Boundary Waters watershed is off limits.**

- **Rather than rehashing a settled score, I hope we can instead work together to reform the future of mining to make it more sustainable, modern, and predictable. But I'm concerned we have different visions for the future.**

- **My vision is one that gives tribes the opportunity to provide input early and often, lets land managers decide where mining should occur, and provides a fair return for taxpayers.**

- **Our clean energy future is not an excuse to extend mining industry destruction even further.**

- **This is an opportunity to raise the bar for mining across the globe and demonstrate that some places, like the Boundary Waters, are simply too special to mine.**

- **I yield back.**