United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Washington, D.C. 20240
http://www.blm.gov

January 31, 2020

In Reply Refer To:
1278-FOIA (640)
FOIA# 2019-00938
1:19-CV-01857

Austin R. Evers
American Oversight
1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Evers:

This letter is an interim response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, dated March 5, 2019 and April 23, 2019 and assigned tracking numbers 2019-00938 and 2019-00952. In your letter, you asked for the following:

All records reflecting communications (including email messages, email attachments, calendar invitations or entries, and any handwritten or typed notes from meetings) between the custodians listed below and the following individuals and entities:

a. Any employee or representative of Antofagasta PLC, including anyone with an email address ending in antofagasta.co.uk;
b. Andronico Luksic, and anyone acting on his behalf such as a chief of staff, scheduler, or assistant;
c. Ivan Arriagada, and anyone acting on his behalf such as a chief of staff, scheduler, or assistant;
d. Any employee or representative of Twin Metals Minnesota (TMM), including anyone with an email address ending in twin-metals.com;
e. Robert Lehman (including but not limited to the email address rob.lehman@wilmerhale.com); and/or
f. Timothy Martin (including but not limited to the email address timothy.martin@wilmerhale.com).

All communications (including email messages, email attachments, calendar invitations or entries, and any handwritten or typed notes from meetings) between the custodians listed below and the following individuals and entities, regarding the mining leases of Twin Metals in Minnesota:

a. Representative Tom Emmer, and anyone acting on his behalf or serving on his

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staff, including but not limited to Christopher Maneval (Christopher.Maneval@mail.house.gov), David Fitzsimmons (David.fitzsimmons@mail.house.gov), Alyssa Anderson (alyssa.anderson@mail.house.gov), Landon Zinda (landon.zinda@mail.house.gov), and Catherine Lenz (Catherine.lenz@mail.house.gov).

b. Representative Paul Gosar, and anyone acting on his behalf or serving on his staff, including but not limited to Thomas Van Flein (tom.vanflein@mail.house.gov), Leslie Foti (leslie.foti@mail.house.gov), Rory Burke (rory.burke@mail.house.gov), and Jeff Small (jeff.small@mail.house.gov).

We are providing via email a PDF file consisting of 139 pages, which is being released in part. Of these, 3 pages are being partially withheld. We reasonably foresee that disclosure would harm an interest protected by one or more of the nine exemptions to the FOIA's general rule of disclosure.

Exemption 5 allows an agency to withhold "inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party... in litigation with the agency." 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5); see Nat'l Labor Relations Bd. v. Sears Roebuck & Co., 421 U.S. 132, 149 (1975). Exemption 5 therefore incorporates the privileges that protect materials from discovery in litigation, including the deliberative process, attorney work-product and attorney-client privileges. The deliberative process privilege protects the decision-making process of government agencies and encourages the "frank exchange of ideas on legal or policy matters" by ensuring agencies are not "forced to operate in a fish bowl." Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. United States Dep't of the Air Force, 566 F.2d 242, 256 (D.C. Cir. 1977) (internal citations omitted). A number of policy purposes have been attributed to the deliberative process privilege. Among the most important are to: (1) "assure that subordinates . . . will feel free to provide the decision maker with their uninhibited opinions and recommendations;" (2) "protect against premature disclosure of proposed policies;" and (3) "protect against confusing the issues and misleading the public." Coastal States Gas Corp. v. United States Dep't of Energy, 617 F.2d 854, 866 (D.C. Cir. 1980). The deliberative process privilege protects materials that are both pre-decisional and deliberative. The privilege covers records that "reflect the give-and-take of the consultative process" and may include "recommendations, draft documents, proposals, suggestions, and other subjective documents which reflect the personal opinions of the writer rather than the policy of the agency."

The materials that have been withheld under the deliberative process privilege of Exemption 5 are both pre-decisional and deliberative. They do not contain or represent formal or informal agency policies or decisions. They are the result of frank and open discussions among employees of the Department of the Interior. Their contents have been held confidential by all parties and public dissemination of this information would have a chilling effect on the agency's deliberative processes; expose the agency's decision-making process in such a way as to discourage candid discussion within the agency, and thereby undermine its ability to perform its mandated functions.

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Exemption 6 of the FOIA allows an agency to withhold "personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." 5 U.S.C. § 552(b) (6).

The phrase "similar files" covers any agency records containing information about a particular individual that can be identified as applying to that individual. *See United States Dept of State v. Washington Post Co.*, 456 U.S. 595, 602 (1982). To determine whether releasing records containing information about a particular individual would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, we are required to balance the privacy interest that would be affected by disclosure against any public interest in the information. *See United States Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 773-75 (1989).

Under the FOIA, "the only relevant public interest" to consider under the exemption is "the extent to which the information sought would 'shed light on an agency's performance of its statutory duties' or otherwise let citizens 'know what their government is up to.'" *United States Dept. of Def. v. Fed. Labor Relations Auth.*, 510 U.S. 487, 495-96 (1994) (*quoting Reporters Comm.*, 489 U.S. at 775). The burden is on the requester to establish that disclosure would serve the public interest. *See National Archives and Records Admin. v. Favish*, 541 U.S. 157, 171-72 (2004). When the privacy interest at stake and the public interest in disclosure have been determined, the two competing interests must be weighed against one another to determine which the greater result of disclosure is: the harm to personal privacy or the benefit to the public. The purposes for which the request for information is made do not impact this balancing test, as a release of information requested under the FOIA constitutes a release to the general public. *See Reporters Comm.*, 489 U.S. at 771.

The information that has been withheld under Exemption 6 consists of personal information including: buyer's cities and states, and phone numbers.

Keiosha Alexander, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) FOIA Officer, is responsible for this release. Briana Collier, Attorney Advisor in the Office of the Solicitor, was consulted.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Sheriff Oladepo, BLM WO FOIA Specialist, at (202) 912-7650 or via email at BLM_WO_FOIA@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

KEIOSHA ALEXANDER

Digitally signed by KEIOSHA ALEXANDER
Date: 2020.01.31 10:36:36 -05'00'

For Ryan Witt, Acting Chief
Division of Intergovernmental and External Affairs

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Benedetto, Kathleen
To: Rick Deery
Cc: Anne Williamson
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Your request
Date: Wednesday, February 27, 2019 5:31:38 PM

Thanks

On Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 5:13 PM Rick Deery (b) (6) wrote:

> my response for your information.
>
> ---------- Forwarded message ---------
> From: **Rick Deery** (b) (6)
> Date: Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 5:12 PM
> Subject: Your request
> To: <hiroko.tabuchi@nytimes.com>
>
> Ms Tabuchi,
>
> Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request for my insights on the circumstances regarding Twin Metals and the Boundary Waters. I regret having to inform you that I have nothing to discuss with you regarding that matter. The program for which I was the program leader prior to my retirement from the Bureau of Land Management earlier this year was the Mining Law Administration Program. The fundamental authority for that program is the General Mining Law, which was enacted and signed into law in 1872. The lands in question were withdrawn from the operation of that law in 1873. Thus, I have had no direct involvement in the matter and have only been an occasionally interested observer.
>
> It would be impolite of me to leave you empty-handed. Thus, I an attaching two items that might deepen your understanding of the matter. One item is a U.S. House of Representatives hearing on Copper and Platinum held by the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources in 2006. I encourage you to consider the testimony of both Ms. Robyn Storer and Dr. David Menzies regarding copper availability. Second I have attached a meeting report from the September 2018 issue of Geoscientist, the Fellowship publication for the Fellows of the Geological Society. The report details a meeting of the City of London Geoscience Forum held in May 2018. I refer you to the to the part of the meeting report that discusses the presentation made by Professor Mike Harris of Imperial College, London. His discussion of copper availability comes 12 years after that of Ms Storer and Dr. Menzie, yet their separate messages remain constant. Going forward both the world and our Nation's economy, whether it is to be green or not, will require more copper. The question in 2018, as it was in 2006, and continues be into the future, "From what source?"
>
> I offer these to you in the hope that they will assist you is developing a broader picture of critical mineral development, not just in northeast Minnesota but elsewhere in the world.
>
> --
>
> Rick Deery
> Geologist
> 301-529-9123

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--

Rick Deery
Geologist
301-529-9123

--

Kathleen Benedetto
Senior Adviser
Bureau of Land Management
Room 5648, MIB
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
Direct: (202) 208-5934
Cell: (202) 336-9318



AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Pagenkopf, Dawn
To: bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com
Cc: Benedetto, Kathleen; Mack-Thompson, Yolando
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Meeting on July 24?
Date: Monday, July 16, 2018 11:15:00 AM

Good afternoon Mr McFarlin,

Kathy would be free from 4-4:30 on July 23rd if that works for you?

Thanks you so much,

Dawn Pagenkopf
Bureau of Land Management
WO-100
Executive Assistant
202-208-3801

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Bob McFarlin** <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>
Date: Thu, Jul 12, 2018 at 11:21 AM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Meeting on July 24?
To: "kbenedetto@blm.gov" <kbenedetto@blm.gov>

Hi Kathy,

I will be in D.C. on Tuesday, July 24 with my Twin Metals colleague Anne Williamson (Environment VP). Wondering if you have some time that day for a brief visit. We would like to provide you a brief update on project issues and activities. Thanks for your consideration. We may also be available late afternoon on the 23rd, if that works better on your end.

Bob McFarlin

Government Affairs Advisor

Twin Metals Minnesota

380 St. Peter St., Suite 705

St. Paul, MN 55102

612-655-2099 (c)

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www.Twin-Metals.com

--
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Direct: (202) 208-5934
Cell: (202) 336-9318

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From: Benedetto, Kathleen
To: Bob McFarlin; Yolando Mack-Thompson; Ursula Massey
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Meeting Request for 4/24 or 4/25
Date: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 11:47:36 AM

I Have time on Tuesday, will not be in town Wednesday. Yolando or Ursula - can you set something up for next Tuesday? Thanks KB

On Mon, Apr 16, 2018 at 6:07 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:

> Hi Kathy,
>
> I hope you are doing well. Writing to ask if you would be available for a brief meeting with me next week, either Tuesday the 24th (sometime between 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.) or Wednesday the 25th (before 10:00 a.m. or between 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.). Would be good to catch up. Thanks for your consideration. Take care.
>
> Bob McFarlin
>
> Government Affairs Advisor
>
> Twin Metals Minnesota
>
> 380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
>
> St. Paul, MN 55102
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From: Massey, Ursula
To: Benedetto, Kathleen
Cc: Yolando Mack-Thompson
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Meeting Request for 4/24 or 4/25
Date: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 12:31:04 PM

Yes, I will schedule something for Tuesday.

Ursula

On Tue, Apr 17, 2018 at 11:47 AM, Benedetto, Kathleen <kbenedetto@blm.gov> wrote:

> I Have time on Tuesday, will not be in town Wednesday. Yolando or Ursula - can you set something up for next Tuesday? Thanks KB
>
> On Mon, Apr 16, 2018 at 6:07 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:
>
> > Hi Kathy,
> >
> > I hope you are doing well. Writing to ask if you would be available for a brief meeting with me next week, either Tuesday the 24th (sometime between 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.) or Wednesday the 25th (before 10:00 a.m. or between 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.). Would be good to catch up. Thanks for your consideration. Take care.
> >
> > Bob McFarlin
> >
> > Government Affairs Advisor
> >
> > Twin Metals Minnesota
> >
> > 380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
> >
> > St. Paul, MN 55102
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--
Ursula Massey
Executive Assistant
BLM-Communications
1849 C Street, NW, Rm: 5645
Washington, DC 20240
202-208-6913 (office)
202-208-6769 (fax)

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From: Mack-Thompson, Yolando
To: Martin, Timothy
Cc: Ursula Massey
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Meeting Request Next Week
Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2018 1:25:24 PM

Perfect! You will meet at 1849 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240 in room 5653.

On Wed, Mar 28, 2018 at 1:18 PM, Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com> wrote:

> Yes. Thank you for coordinating.
>
> Best,
> Tim
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> On Mar 28, 2018, at 1:12 PM, Mack-Thompson, Yolando <ymackthompson@blm.gov> wrote:
>
>> Good Afternoon,
>>
>> Kathy is available Monday at 5:00pm with this work for you?
>>
>> On Wed, Mar 28, 2018 at 12:19 PM, Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com> wrote:
>>
>>> Kathy,
>>>
>>> Thank you. If you have availability on Monday late afternoon, we will make it work.
>>>
>>> Thanks,
>>>
>>> Tim
>>>
>>> **From:** Benedetto, Kathleen [mailto:kbenedetto@blm.gov]
>>> **Sent:** Wednesday, March 28, 2018 12:12 PM
>>> **To:** Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com>; Yolando Mack-Thompson <ymackthompson@blm.gov>; Ursula Massey <umassey@blm.gov>
>>> **Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Meeting Request Next Week

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Tim,

I will be out of town Tuesday through Thursday. I might be able to meet late afternoon Monday. KB

On Wed, Mar 28, 2018 at 11:20 AM, Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com> wrote:

> Hi Kathy,
>
> I hope you are well. Do you have any availability to meet next week (April 2-5)? My colleague Raya Treiser and I would like to quickly brief on the Twin Metals project in Minnesota and next steps.
>
> Thanks so much for your time and consideration.
>
> Best,
>
> Tim
>
> **Tim Martin | WilmerHale**
> 1875 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
> Washington, DC 20006 USA
> +1 202 663 6539 (t)
> +1 202 663 6363 (f)
> tim.martin@wilmerhale.com
>
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Kathleen Benedetto

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Cell: (202) 336-9318

--

Thanks,

Yolando Mack-Thompson

Executive Assistant

BLM Director's Office

1849 C Street NW Suite 5662

Washington, DC 20240

202-208-4294 (Direct Line)

202-208-5242 (Fax)

ymackthompson@blm.gov

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--

Thanks,

Yolando Mack-Thompson

Executive Assistant

BLM Director's Office

1849 C Street NW Suite 5662

Washington, DC 20240

202-208-4294 (Direct Line)

202-208-5242 (Fax)

ymackthompson@blm.gov

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From: Benedetto, Kathleen
To: Martin, Timothy; Yolando Mack-Thompson; Ursula Massey
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Meeting Request Next Week
Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2018 12:11:58 PM

Tim,

I will be out of town Tuesday through Thursday. I might be able to meet late afternoon Monday. KB

On Wed, Mar 28, 2018 at 11:20 AM, Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com> wrote:

> Hi Kathy,
>
> I hope you are well. Do you have any availability to meet next week (April 2-5)? My colleague Raya Treiser and I would like to quickly brief on the Twin Metals project in Minnesota and next steps.
>
> Thanks so much for your time and consideration.
>
> Best,
>
> Tim
>
> **Tim Martin | WilmerHale**
> 1875 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
> Washington, DC 20006 USA
> +1 202 663 6539 (t)
> +1 202 663 6363 (f)
> tim.martin@wilmerhale.com
>
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>
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Cell: (202) 336-9318

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From: Mack-Thompson, Yolando
To: Martin, Timothy
Cc: Ursula Massey
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Meeting Request Next Week
Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2018 1:11:41 PM

Good Afternoon,

Kathy is available Monday at 5:00pm with this work for you?

On Wed, Mar 28, 2018 at 12:19 PM, Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com> wrote:

> Kathy,
>
> Thank you. If you have availability on Monday late afternoon, we will make it work.
>
> Thanks,
>
> Tim
>
> **From:** Benedetto, Kathleen [mailto:kbenedetto@blm.gov]
> **Sent:** Wednesday, March 28, 2018 12:12 PM
> **To:** Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com>; Yolando Mack-Thompson <ymackthompson@blm.gov>; Ursula Massey <umassey@blm.gov>
> **Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Meeting Request Next Week
>
> Tim,
>
> I will be out of town Tuesday through Thursday. I might be able to meet late afternoon Monday. KB
>
> On Wed, Mar 28, 2018 at 11:20 AM, Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com> wrote:
>
> > Hi Kathy,
> >
> > I hope you are well. Do you have any availability to meet next week (April 2-5)? My colleague Raya Treiser and I would like to quickly brief on the Twin Metals project in

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Minnesota and next steps.

Thanks so much for your time and consideration.

Best,

Tim

Tim Martin | WilmerHale
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--

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--

Thanks,

Yolando Mack-Thompson

Executive Assistant

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202-208-5242 (Fax)

ymackthompson@blm.gov

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From:	Matt Ellsworth
To:	Bob McFarlin; Laura Skaer
Cc:	Kathy Benedetto (kbenedetto@blm.gov)
Subject:	RE: Benedetto E-mail?
Date:	Monday, October 16, 2017 12:20:13 PM

kbenedetto@blm.gov

From: Bob McFarlin [mailto:bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com]
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2017 9:16 AM
To: Laura Skaer <lskaer@miningamerica.org>; Matt Ellsworth <ellsworth@miningamerica.org>
Subject: Benedetto E-mail?

Do you guys have a current e-mail address for Kathy Benedetto? The one I have - kathleen_benedetto@ios.doi.gov – is suddenly bouncing back. Thanks.

Bob McFarlin
Government Affairs Advisor
Twin Metals Minnesota
380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
St. Paul, MN 55102
612-655-2099 (c)

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From: Benedetto, Kathleen
To: Anne Williamson
Subject: Re: Comment Letter
Date: Thursday, February 8, 2018 6:45:54 PM

Thanks

On Thu, Feb 8, 2018 at 5:00 PM, Anne Williamson <awilliamson@twin-metals.com> wrote:

> Kathy,
>
> I am forwarding several items you may find useful. Attached is Appendix A to TMM's comments submitted as part of the mineral withdraw Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping. This appendix addresses the geochemical properties of the rocks at the TMM site and why the tailings will be non-acid generating. As stated in the report, this work is only the beginning of what will be completed to support a project-specific EIS once a formal mine proposal is submitted.
>
> Also, here is a link to a news story from December 2015 reporting the Dayton Administration's rejection of a Heath Impact Assessment (HIA) for the PolyMet Project. Governor Dayton's action was based on a joint recommendation from the commissioners of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Minnesota Department of Health http://blogs.twincities.com/politics/2015/12/07/dayton-administration-no-need-polymet-health-study/. It was recognized by the commissioners that an HIA would be duplicative of the work already done as part of Polymet's project-specific EIS.
>
> Additionally I'd like to point out the statement in the May 2017 letter from the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians that their request to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) that HIAs be required for all proposed mining projects in the state is "pending vote" is a misrepresentation. The EQB held a hearing in October 2016 on the proposal, has taken no further action on that proposal, and is not required to take any further action.
>
> Regards,
>
> **Anne L. Williamson**
>
> Vice President – Environment & Sustainability
>
> Twin Metals Minnesota
>
> 380 St. Peter St.

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

Suite 705

St. Paul, MN 55102

From: Benedetto, Kathleen [mailto:kbenedetto@blm.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, February 06, 2018 3:03 PM
To: Anne Williamson <awilliamson@twin-metals.com>
Subject: Comment Letter

--

Kathleen Benedetto

Senior Adviser

Bureau of Land Management

Room 5648, MIB

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From: Benedetto, Kathleen
To: Anne Williamson
Subject: Re: Comment Letter
Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2018 4:47:27 PM

You're welcome.

On Tue, Feb 6, 2018 at 4:23 PM, Anne Williamson <awilliamson@twin-metals.com> wrote:

> Thank you Kathy.
>
> Regards,
>
> Anne
>
> **From:** Benedetto, Kathleen [mailto:kbenedetto@blm.gov]
> **Sent:** Tuesday, February 06, 2018 3:03 PM
> **To:** Anne Williamson <awilliamson@twin-metals.com>
> **Subject:** Comment Letter
>
> --
>
> Kathleen Benedetto
>
> Senior Adviser
>
> Bureau of Land Management
>
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AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Balash, Joseph
To: Tollefson, Christopher
Cc: Casey Hammond; Amanda Kaster; Jeff Krauss; Beverly Winston
Subject: Re: For review: Proposed responses to NYTimes inquiry on Twin Metals
Date: Thursday, June 6, 2019 7:03:45 PM

I am fine with these answers. The Secretary's office will need to answer #5.

On Thu, Jun 6, 2019 at 5:04 PM Tollefson, Christopher <ctollefson@blm.gov> wrote:

> Casey and Joe,
>
> Hiroko Tabuchi and Steve Eder at the NY Times had a series of followup questions on the Twin Metals Mine decision. If you'll recall, we had declined an interview with you, Joe, last week, but did answer some basic questions.
>
> Attached and below are their additional questions, and our proposed response. These have been vetted by our Eastern States and Solid Minerals leadership. I've reworked them a bit to make them clearer, and Amanda and SOL have also provided edits.
>
> Please let me know if you have any edits, or would like to discuss further. The NYT gave us a deadline of 5pm today, but indicated we could get the answers to them tomorrow when I told them we weren't going to make it by 5.
>
> From the NY Times:
>
> "Here are the details related to DOI that we intend to report in our story, and our follow-up questions. We would appreciate a response by 5 p.m. ET Thursday.
>
> In summary, our article is looking at the trajectory of the Twin Metals/Boundary Waters mine during the Trump administration. The piece addresses the Luksic family, which owns the mining project, and Andronico Luksic, who is landlord to Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner in Washington. We reviewed DOI documents released through public records requests for this article.
>
> Here are some points we plan to include:
>
> - In a 2016 assessment, then Forest Service chief Thomas Tidwell warned of environmental risks posed by mining in the Boundary Waters watershed, including the risk of acid mine drainage. DOI subsequently declined to renew two leases held by Twin Metals in the BW watershed.
> - Early in the Trump administration -- as early as Feb. 1, 2017 -- top political appointees at the Department of the Interior met to start re-examining Twin Metals' leases. The takeaway from that meeting was that officials should prepare for a change in direction.
> - The same month, DOI ordered up a briefing paper looking at ways to reinstate the leases and cancel the mining-ban study.
> - On Feb. 22 2017, the department prepared to brief incoming Interior Secretary, Ryan Zinke,

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

on the issue, in an exercise one Interior official described as a “fire drill.”

- Antofagasta’s chief executive, Ivan Arriagada, soon held a series of meetings with administration officials, including top political appointees at Interior and President Trump’s energy adviser at the White House.

- On June 1, Interior officials heard from the White House that it had expressed an interest in the Twin Metals matter, according to an email to colleagues sent by DOI lawyer Karen Hawbecker with the subject marked “TIME SENSITIVE.”

- Also in early June, top Interior Department political appointees including Kathy Benedetto traveled to the project site in Minnesota.

- On December 22, 2017, the Interior Department nullified the Obama administration’s decision to deny Antofagasta’s mineral leases. The same day, Twin Metals moves to withdraw its lawsuit against the government. In May 2019, the leases were formally renewed.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the Twin Metals leases come up as a topic of discussion so early in the administration? Why was overturning the Obama administration’s policy on this matter taken up as a policy priority?

Proposed Answer: The Twin Metals leases were addressed as a routine matter of Departmental review that is consistent with Administration-to-Administration turnover. The BLM’s decision rejecting the Twin Metals leases was issued in the eleventh hour of the last administration on December 15, 2016, which made it a subject of interest for the incoming administration.

The BLM originally issued preference right mineral leases MNES 01352 and MNES 01353 in 1966 for a 20-year term, and renewed them in 1989 and 2004 for 10-year terms each. The leaseholder timely filed for renewal in both instances, and the leases continued to be in effect during the time it took the agencies to process the renewal applications. Subsequently, however, a Department of the Interior Solicitor’s Opinion (M-37036) concluded that the leaseholder did not have a non-discretionary right to a third lease renewal and that the agencies had the discretion to deny the renewal applications. Following a public process, the Forest Service issued a decision denying consent and the BLM in turn issued a decision rejecting the renewal application and terminated the leases.

However, on December 22, 2017, the Office of the Solicitor re-examined the previous Solicitor’s Opinion and issued a new legal opinion (M-37049), which reversed and replaced the prior solicitor opinion. The December 2017 opinion concluded that the analysis in the 2016 opinion was incorrect and that the original 1966 leases gave the lessee a non-discretionary right to a third lease renewal.

On May 2, 2018, the BLM issued a decision that rescinded the prior decision to terminate the leases and also reinstated the leases and the application for lease

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

renewal.

2. What role did the White House play in setting Interior policy regarding the Twin Metals leases? Did White House officials intervene in any way on policy-making at Interior on this issue?

Proposed Answer: As said above, the Solicitor's Office reviewed the prior Solicitor's Opinion and found it to be in error. BLM then relied on the new Solicitor's Opinion to reinstate the leases.

3. How did Interior's meeting with Antofagasta executives come about? What was discussed? How did the visit by Interior to the planned mining site in Minnesota come about? What was the purpose of the visit?

Proposed answer: Typically, DOI agrees to meetings when outside parties request them. When Antofofagasta representatives requested meetings, DOI agreed to have some meetings. DOI also met with other parties on the subject of the Twin Metals leases, including community and environmental interest groups.

4. Did DOI weigh in on the Superior National Forest mining withdrawal study conducted by the Forest Service, which was canceled in September 2018?

Proposed answer: To be clear, the Forest Service application on December 14, 2016, that proposed the 20-year withdrawal from mineral leasing laws on 234,328 acres of Federal mineral estate within the Superior National Forest is a separate and distinct issue than the May 15, 2019, non-discretionary renewal of hardrock mineral leases MNES 01352 and MNES 01353.

In response to Forest Service's proposed 20-year withdrawal, BLM published a Federal Register notice on January 19, 2017, which announced the proposed withdrawal and initiated a two-year segregation from mineral leasing laws; however, as your question notes, the Forest Service later submitted a letter to the BLM on September 6, 2018, canceling the application for the withdrawal and canceling the segregation.

Canceling the withdrawal of those lands within the Rainy River Watershed required the BLM, in accordance with federal law and departmental policy, to move forward with processing all mineral applications and environmental reviews in the Duluth Complex. The Complex, a 16-mile-long geologic series of one-billion-year-old rocks near the towns of Babbitt and Ely in northeastern Minnesota, includes large deposits of copper, nickel and strategic metals. These strategic metals are designated as essential elements needed for aerospace and defense industries, as well as the manufacture of batteries and electronics.

This decision is consistent with Executive Order 13817 (December 20, 2017), Federal Strategy to Ensure Secure and Reliable Supplies of Critical Minerals, "An increase in private-sector domestic exploration, production, recycling, and reprocessing of critical minerals, and support for efforts to identify more commonly

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

available technological alternatives to these minerals, will reduce our dependence on imports, preserve our leadership in technological innovation, support job creation, improve our national security and balance of trade, and enhance the technological superiority and readiness of our Armed Forces, which are among the Nation's most significant consumers of critical minerals."

5. Did Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump's connection to the family that owns the mine play any role in Interior's handling of these issues? Did they make any requests for DOI officials on this matter?

Proposed Answer: (None. We defer to DOI for this answer.)

6. Critics have shared concerns that Interior's reinstatement of the Twin Metals leases as politically motivated and not based on sound legal or environmental analysis or reasoning. Does Interior have a response?

Proposed response: It is inaccurate to say that this decision was made without "*sound legal or environmental analysis or reasoning."* The Acting BLM Eastern States Director Mitchell Leverette signed a decision reinstating the leases on May 2, 2018, with the concurrence of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, Joe Balash. The non-discretionary reinstatement of theses hardrock mineral leases relied on a binding legal opinion from the Office of the Solicitor, as well as BLM's statutory responsibilities and departmental policy. This nineteen-page legal opinion has extensive legal analysis and reasoning. See https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/m-37049.pdf

Following the reinstatement, BLM Eastern States Office Director Karen Mouritsen and Assistant Secretary Joe Balash signed the two Twin Metals Minnesota LLC-held hardrock mineral lease renewals on May 15, 2019. The renewals were signed only after public disclosure of the draft Environmental Assessment and a 41-day public review and comment period that began on December 20, 2018. The draft Environmental Assessment addressed whether to modify the terms and conditions and add additional stipulations to the leases or whether to renew the leases with their existing terms and conditions.

The Bureau of Land Management received more than 39,000 comments during this period. Those comments informed the Department of the Interior's decision to modify the terms and conditions of the leases, as well as to add environmentally protective stipulations, prior to the Department's renewal of the leases. To prevent public lands from being indefinitely encumbered by these leases with no benefit to the public, the terms placed on the renewed leases include new diligent development requirements, whereby the lessee is obligated to submit a complete, proposed mine plan of operations, obtain all necessary permits, and meet certain project milestones for mine construction within this 10-year term, or the leases will be terminated. The renewed lease terms also disallow the use of strip mining, rim cutting, or open pit mining methods, among other environmentally protective measures.

If and when Twin Metals Minnesota LLC submits a formal Mine Plan of Operation to

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

the BLM, the Bureau would prepare a detailed Environmental Impact Statement that would thoroughly analyze the potential environmental impacts from the proposed mine. Public involvement at the scoping and draft Environmental Impact Statement phase would be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations under the National Environmental Policy Act and Administrative Procedures Act.

--

Chris Tollefson – Chief of Public Affairs

Bureau of Land Management – 20 M Street, SE, Washington, D.C. 20003

(202) 912-7410 (W) (202) 379-6905 (M) www.blm.gov



AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Bob McFarlin
To: Mitchell Leverette
Subject: Re: Just Checking E-mail
Date: Wednesday, January 31, 2018 7:37:32 AM

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jan 31, 2018, at 5:58 AM, Mitchell Leverette <mleveret@blm.gov> wrote:
>
> Got your test email.
>
> Mitch
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
>> On Jan 30, 2018, at 11:56 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:
>>
>> Hi Mitch,
>>
>> Hope you are well. Just checking - can you confirm this is your e-mail. Been getting a bounce back message. Thanks.
>>
>> Sent from my iPhone

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Mitchell Leverette
To: Bob McFarlin
Subject: Re: Just Checking E-mail
Date: Wednesday, January 31, 2018 6:58:40 AM

Got your test email.

Mitch

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jan 30, 2018, at 11:56 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:
>
> Hi Mitch,
>
> Hope you are well. Just checking - can you confirm this is your e-mail. Been getting a bounce back message. Thanks.
>
> Sent from my iPhone

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Bob McFarlin
To: Mitchell Leverette
Subject: Re: Just Checking E-mail
Date: Wednesday, January 31, 2018 7:37:04 AM

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jan 31, 2018, at 5:58 AM, Mitchell Leverette <mleveret@blm.gov> wrote:
>
> Got your test email.
>
> Mitch
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
>> On Jan 30, 2018, at 11:56 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:
>>
>> Hi Mitch,
>>
>> Hope you are well. Just checking - can you confirm this is your e-mail. Been getting a bounce back message. Thanks.
>>
>> Sent from my iPhone

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Benedetto, Kathleen
To: Thurn, Linda
Subject: Re: Meeting Next Week?
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 2:34:27 PM

You can check and see if he wants to attend

On Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 1:49 PM, Thurn, Linda <lthurn@blm.gov> wrote:

> He's on your calendar for Tuesday, April 18 at 2:30 pm. Please let me know if you'd like me to add Marshall.
>
> Thanks,
> Linda
>
> On Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 10:30 AM, Benedetto, Kathleen <kathleen_benedetto@ios.doi.gov> wrote:
>
> > Can you set this up? Thanks KB
> >
> > ---------- Forwarded message ----------
> > From: **Bob McFarlin** <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>
> > Date: Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 9:50 AM
> > Subject: Meeting Next Week?
> > To: "Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov" <Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov>
> >
> > Dear Kathy,
> >
> > Would you be available to meet with me next week - later in the afternoon next Tuesday, any time Wednesday up to 1:30 pm., or Wednesday after 3:30 pm? I will be in DC for a short visit. Thanks.
> >
> > Bob McFarlin
> >
> > Government Affairs Advisor
> >
> > Twin Metals Minnesota
> >
> > 380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
> >
> > St. Paul, MN 55102
> >
> > 612-655-2099 (c)
> >
> > www.Twin-Metals.com

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

--
Kathleen Benedetto
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
(202) 208-5934

--
Kathleen Benedetto
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
(202) 208-5934

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Thurn, Linda
To: Benedetto, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Meeting Next Week?
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 1:49:59 PM

He's on your calendar for Tuesday, April 18 at 2:30 pm. Please let me know if you'd like me to add Marshall.

Thanks,
Linda

On Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 10:30 AM, Benedetto, Kathleen <kathleen_benedetto@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

> Can you set this up? Thanks KB
>
> ---------- Forwarded message ----------
> From: **Bob McFarlin** <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>
> Date: Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 9:50 AM
> Subject: Meeting Next Week?
> To: "Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov" <Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov>
>
> Dear Kathy,
>
> Would you be available to meet with me next week - later in the afternoon next Tuesday, any time Wednesday up to 1:30 pm., or Wednesday after 3:30 pm? I will be in DC for a short visit. Thanks.
>
> Bob McFarlin
>
> Government Affairs Advisor
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AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

--
Kathleen Benedetto
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
(202) 208-5934

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Thurn, Linda
To: Bob McFarlin
Subject: Re: Meeting Next Week?
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 12:19:46 PM

Sorry, I was looking at the wrong week. On Tuesday, April 18 she is available at 2:30 pm and on Wednesday April 19 she is available from 3:30 - 4:00.

Thank you,
Linda Thurn
Executive Assistant
Bureau of Land Management
202-208-3801

On Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 12:02 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:

> Good morning, Linda. I will be in DC the week earlier, April 18-19. I could certainly meet Tuesday, April 18 @ 4:30 pm if that would be available.
>
> Bob McFarlin
>
> Government Affairs Advisor
>
> Twin Metals Minnesota
>
> 380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
>
> St. Paul, MN 55102
>
> 612-655-2099 (c)
>
> www.Twin-Metals.com
>
> **From:** Thurn, Linda [mailto:lthurn@blm.gov]
> **Sent:** Tuesday, April 11, 2017 10:18 AM
> **To:** Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>
> **Subject:** Re: Meeting Next Week?

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

Good morning,

Would Tuesday, April 25 at 4:30 pm work with your schedule?

Thank you,

Linda Thurn

Executive Assistant

Bureau of Land Management

202-208-3801

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Bob McFarlin** <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 9:50 AM
Subject: Meeting Next Week?
To: "Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov" <Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov>

Dear Kathy,

Would you be available to meet with me next week - later in the afternoon next Tuesday, any time Wednesday up to 1:30 pm., or Wednesday after 3:30 pm? I will be in DC for a short visit. Thanks.

Bob McFarlin

Government Affairs Advisor

Twin Metals Minnesota

380 St. Peter St., Suite 705

St. Paul, MN 55102

612-655-2099 (c)

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

www.Twin-Metals.com

--

Kathleen Benedetto

Special Assistant to the Secretary

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

(202) 208-5934

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Thurn, Linda
To: bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com
Subject: Re: Meeting Next Week?
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 11:18:21 AM

Good morning,

Would Tuesday, April 25 at 4:30 pm work with your schedule?

Thank you,
Linda Thurn
Executive Assistant
Bureau of Land Management
202-208-3801

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Bob McFarlin** <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 9:50 AM
Subject: Meeting Next Week?
To: "Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov" <Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov>

Dear Kathy,

Would you be available to meet with me next week - later in the afternoon next Tuesday, any time Wednesday up to 1:30 pm., or Wednesday after 3:30 pm? I will be in DC for a short visit. Thanks.

Bob McFarlin

Government Affairs Advisor

Twin Metals Minnesota

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St. Paul, MN 55102

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AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

--
Kathleen Benedetto
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
(202) 208-5934

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Thurn, Linda
To: Bob McFarlin
Subject: Re: Meeting Next Week?
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 1:48:34 PM

Please come to 1849 C Street NW, Suite 5653, Washington, DC 20240 on April 18 at 2:30 pm Eastern Time. When you get to the guard's desk give them our office number 202-208-3801.

Thank you,
Linda Thurn
Executive Assistant
Bureau of Land Management
202-208-3801

On Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 1:20 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:

> Thank you, Linda. Tuesday, April 18 @ 2:30 would be great. Location?
>
> Bob McFarlin
>
> Government Affairs Advisor
>
> Twin Metals Minnesota
>
> 380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
>
> St. Paul, MN 55102
>
> 612-655-2099 (c)
>
> www.Twin-Metals.com
>
> **From:** Thurn, Linda [mailto:lthurn@blm.gov]
> **Sent:** Tuesday, April 11, 2017 11:19 AM
> **To:** Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>
> **Subject:** Re: Meeting Next Week?

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

Sorry, I was looking at the wrong week. On Tuesday, April 18 she is available at 2:30 pm and on Wednesday April 19 she is available from 3:30 - 4:00.

Thank you,

Linda Thurn

Executive Assistant

Bureau of Land Management

202-208-3801

On Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 12:02 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:

> Good morning, Linda. I will be in DC the week earlier, April 18-19. I could certainly meet Tuesday, April 18 @ 4:30 pm if that would be available.
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> Bob McFarlin
>
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> 612-655-2099 (c)
>
> www.Twin-Metals.com
>
> **From:** Thurn, Linda [mailto:lthurn@blm.gov]
> **Sent:** Tuesday, April 11, 2017 10:18 AM
> **To:** Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

Subject: Re: Meeting Next Week?

Good morning,

Would Tuesday, April 25 at 4:30 pm work with your schedule?

Thank you,

Linda Thurn

Executive Assistant

Bureau of Land Management

202-208-3801

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Bob McFarlin** <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 9:50 AM
Subject: Meeting Next Week?
To: "Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov" <Kathleen_Benedetto@ios.doi.gov>

Dear Kathy,

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Bob McFarlin

Government Affairs Advisor

Twin Metals Minnesota

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St. Paul, MN 55102

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AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

www.Twin-Metals.com

--

Kathleen Benedetto

Special Assistant to the Secretary

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

(202) 208-5934

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Thurn, Linda
To: Mitchell Leverette
Subject: Re: Meeting on Friday with Twin Metals
Date: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 6:06:24 PM

Can you join Kathy Benedetto on Friday, December 15 at 2:00 pm? I just sent a calendar invite.

Thank you,
Linda Thurn
Executive Assistant
Bureau of Land Management
WO-100
202-208-3801

On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 12:59 PM, Benedetto, Kathleen <kbenedetto@blm.gov> wrote:

> Hi Linda,
>
> Can you find a slot Friday afternoon when we might be able to meet. You might invite Mitch and maybe some of the other Mining Folks from M Street. Thanks KB
>
> On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 12:45 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:
>
> > Hi Kathy,
> >
> > I hope this finds you well. Wondering if you would be available for a short visit this Friday (12/15). I am coming to DC for a quick meeting with USFS Chief Tooke and would love to touch base. I will be traveling with Twin Metals' VP of Environment and Sustainability, Anne Williamson, who you met in Minnesota this past summer. Might you be available after noon on Friday? Also wondering if Mitch Leverette might also be available. (I don't have his direct e-mail.) Thanks for your consideration.
> >
> > Bob McFarlin
> >
> > Government Affairs Advisor
> >
> > Twin Metals Minnesota
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> > St. Paul, MN 55102
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> >
> > www.Twin-Metals.com

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

--
Kathleen Benedetto
Senior Adviser
Bureau of Land Management
Room 5648, MIB
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
Direct: (202) 208-5934
Cell: (202) 336-9318

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Benedetto, Kathleen
To: Bob McFarlin; Linda Thurn; Leverette, Mitchell
Subject: Re: Meeting on Friday?
Date: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 12:59:12 PM

Hi Linda,

Can you find a slot Friday afternoon when we might be able to meet. You might invite Mitch and maybe some of the other Mining Folks from M Street. Thanks KB

On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 12:45 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:

> Hi Kathy,
>
> I hope this finds you well. Wondering if you would be available for a short visit this Friday (12/15). I am coming to DC for a quick meeting with USFS Chief Tooke and would love to touch base. I will be traveling with Twin Metals' VP of Environment and Sustainability, Anne Williamson, who you met in Minnesota this past summer. Might you be available after noon on Friday? Also wondering if Mitch Leverette might also be available. (I don't have his direct e-mail.) Thanks for your consideration.
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> Bob McFarlin
>
> Government Affairs Advisor
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--
Kathleen Benedetto

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

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Bureau of Land Management
Room 5648, MIB
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
Direct: (202) 208-5934
Cell: (202) 336-9318

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Thurn, Linda
To: Bob McFarlin
Subject: Re: Meeting on Friday?
Date: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 6:07:43 PM

Good afternoon,

Please come to the Department of the Interior building at 1849 C St NW, Washington, DC 20240 on Friday, December 20 at 2:00 pm Eastern Time. You'll need to show photo ID at the guard's desk in the lobby, and tell the guards that you're attending a meeting in BLM conference room # 5653. There will be a magnetometer and parcel inspection. Our office number is 202-208-3801.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Linda Thurn
Executive Assistant
Bureau of Land Management
202-208-3801

On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 12:59 PM, Benedetto, Kathleen <kbenedetto@blm.gov> wrote:

> Hi Linda,
>
> Can you find a slot Friday afternoon when we might be able to meet. You might invite Mitch and maybe some of the other Mining Folks from M Street. Thanks KB
>
> On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 12:45 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:
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> > Hi Kathy,
> >
> > I hope this finds you well. Wondering if you would be available for a short visit this Friday (12/15). I am coming to DC for a quick meeting with USFS Chief Tooke and would love to touch base. I will be traveling with Twin Metals' VP of Environment and Sustainability, Anne Williamson, who you met in Minnesota this past summer. Might you be available after noon on Friday? Also wondering if Mitch Leverette might also be available. (I don't have his direct e-mail.) Thanks for your consideration.
> >
> > Bob McFarlin
> >
> > Government Affairs Advisor
> >
> > Twin Metals Minnesota
> >
> > 380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
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> > St. Paul, MN 55102
> >
> > 612-655-2099 (c)

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

www.Twin-Metals.com

--
Kathleen Benedetto
Senior Adviser
Bureau of Land Management
Room 5648, MIB
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
Direct: (202) 208-5934
Cell: (202) 336-9318

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Mack-Thompson, Yolando
To: Martin, Timothy; Michael Anderson; Tracie Lassiter
Subject: Re: Meeting Request
Date: Wednesday, April 5, 2017 1:25:42 PM

Good Afternoon,

I have added Michael Anderson and Tracie Lassiter to the email, they will be able to assist you with your request.

On Wed, Apr 5, 2017 at 1:15 PM, Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com> wrote:

> Hi Yolando,
>
> Thank you so much for all your help scheduling my meeting with Kathleen Benedetto a few weeks ago. I very much appreciate it.
>
> I am hoping to schedule a meeting with Katharine MacGregor at DoI regarding a mining project in Minnesota that is a great example of a significant opportunity for job creation and economic growth. I am happy to work around Katharine's busy schedule.
>
> If you are not the right person to contact to schedule this potential meeting, could you steer me in the right direction?
>
> Thanks for your time and consideration.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> **Tim Martin | WilmerHale**
> 1875 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
> Washington, DC 20006 USA
> +1 202 663 6539 (t)
> +1 202 663 6363 (f)
> tim.martin@wilmerhale.com
>
> **Please consider the environment before printing this email.**
>
> ---
>
> This email message and any attachments are being sent by Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP, are confidential, and may be

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify us immediately—by replying to this message or by sending an email to postmaster@wilmerhale.com—and destroy all copies of this message and any attachments. Thank you.

For more information about WilmerHale, please visit us at http://www.wilmerhale.com.

--

Thanks,

Yolando Mack-Thompson

Executive Assistant

BLM Director's Office

1849 C Street NW Suite 5662

Washington, DC 20240

202-208-4294 (Direct Line)

202-208-5242 (Fax)

ymackthompson@blm.gov

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Mack-Thompson, Yolando
To: Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com
Subject: Re: Meeting Request
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 11:15:40 AM

CORRECTION

It is Friday, March 24th.

On Tue, Mar 21, 2017 at 11:05 AM, Mack-Thompson, Yolando <ymackthompson@blm.gov> wrote:

> Good Morning,
>
> Kathleen Benedetto is available on Thursday, March 24 at 10:00am, will this work for you?
>
> --
>
> *Thanks,*
>
> *Yolando Mack-Thompson*
>
> *Executive Assistant*
>
> *BLM Director's Office*
>
> *1849 C Street NW Suite 5662*
>
> *Washington, DC 20240*
>
> *202-208-4294 (Direct Line)*
>
> *202-208-5242 (Fax)*
>
> *ymackthompson@blm.gov*

--

Thanks,

Yolando Mack-Thompson

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

Executive Assistant

BLM Director's Office

1849 C Street NW Suite 5662

Washington, DC 20240

202-208-4294 (Direct Line)

202-208-5242 (Fax)

ymackthompson@blm.gov

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Mack-Thompson, Yolando
To: Martin, Timothy
Subject: Re: Meeting Request
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 11:21:55 AM

Perfect!

You are confirmed for March 24, at 10:00am to meet with Kathleen Benedetto. Please come to 1849 E Street NW Suite 5653, Washington, DC 20240. When you get to the guards desk give them our office number 202-208-3801. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

On Tue, Mar 21, 2017 at 11:17 AM, Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com> wrote:

> Yes, Friday at 10 am works. Thank you!
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> On Mar 21, 2017, at 11:16 AM, Mack-Thompson, Yolando <ymackthompson@blm.gov> wrote:
>
> > CORRECTION
> >
> > It is Friday, March 24th.
> >
> > On Tue, Mar 21, 2017 at 11:05 AM, Mack-Thompson, Yolando <ymackthompson@blm.gov> wrote:
> >
> > > Good Morning,
> > >
> > > Kathleen Benedetto is available on Thursday, March 24 at 10:00am, will this work for you?
> > >
> > > --
> > >
> > > *Thanks,*
> > >
> > > *Yolando Mack-Thompson*
> > >
> > > *Executive Assistant*
> > >
> > > *BLM Director's Office*
> > >
> > > *1849 C Street NW Suite 5662*
> > >
> > > *Washington, DC 20240*
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AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

> > ymackthompson@blm.gov
>
> --
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> *Thanks,*
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> *Yolando Mack-Thompson*
>
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Yolando Mack-Thompson

Executive Assistant

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Washington, DC 20240

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

202-208-4294 (Direct Line)

202-208-5242 (Fax)

ymackthompson@blm.gov

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From:	Heiple, Bonnie
To:	Katharine MacGregor
Cc:	Martin, Timothy; Tracie Lassiter; ymackthompson@blm.gov
Subject:	Re: Speaker Invitation - Women in Energy and Infrastructure Conference
Date:	Saturday, September 9, 2017 2:01:23 PM

Wonderful! We'll stay tuned for final sign off from your ethics folks, but otherwise plan on your participation. Look forward to meeting you.

All best,

Bonnie Heiple | WilmerHale
60 State Street
Boston, MA 02127
617-526-6745
Bonnie.Heiple@wilmerhale.com

On Sep 9, 2017, at 1:52 PM, Katharine MacGregor <katharine_macgregor@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

Hey Bonnie - This sounds like a great event and I would love to participate assuming ethics signs off on this. I'm CC'ing our EAs, Tracie and Yolando to work with you on getting this on the calendar. Thanks for the opportunity and for thinking of me.
- Kate

On Sep 6, 2017, at 2:04 PM, Heiple, Bonnie <Bonnie.Heiple@wilmerhale.com> wrote:

> Kate,
>
> On behalf of WilmerHale, I invite you to participate as a speaker at an upcoming conference we're hosting in Washington, D.C. on November 2, 2017, titled ***Women in Energy and Infrastructure—Powering the Future***. We think you'd be a perfect fit for the first panel of the day, **"The Future of US Energy Development,"** will forecast the overall direction of the industry in light of the current political climate and unique regulatory challenges. The panel currently is scheduled for 9:45-10:45am. I will serve as the moderator and will work with you and other panel speakers to prepare for an engaging session.
>
> The conference is being structured as a definitive forum for discussion regarding issues driving energy innovation, as well an exchange of ideas on the future of our nation's infrastructure development. Speakers and attendees will include C-level executives, in-house counsel, and industry association and public sector representatives.
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> Other conference sessions will include a CEO forum and a discussion with former US Trade Representative, Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky on US energy dominance and trade. Those sessions will be structured around three additional panels, covering

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federal review of energy and infrastructure projects, corporate advocacy in the age of partisan politics, and how to anticipate legal challenges.

This event will be structured to comply with the "widely attended gathering" guidelines, will be open and advertised to the public, and is free of charge. We would be happy to provide any additional information you may need.

Please let me know if you are interested and available to join us for what promises to be a thought provoking day and excellent networking opportunity.

Thanks,

Bonnie Heiple | WilmerHale
60 State Street
Boston, MA 02109
617-526-6745
Bonnie.Heiple@wilmerhale.com

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From:	Heiple, Bonnie
To:	Katharine MacGregor
Cc:	Martin, Timothy; Tracie Lassiter; ymackthompson@blm.gov
Subject:	Re: Speaker Invitation - Women in Energy and Infrastructure Conference
Date:	Saturday, September 9, 2017 2:03:02 PM

Wonderful! We'll stay tuned for final sign off from your ethics folks, but otherwise plan on your participation. Look forward to meeting you.

All best,

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60 State Street
Boston, MA 02127
617-526-6745
Bonnie.Heiple@wilmerhale.com

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617-526-6745
Bonnie.Heiple@wilmerhale.com

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From:	Heiple, Bonnie
To:	Katharine MacGregor
Cc:	Martin, Timothy; Tracie Lassiter; ymackthompson@blm.gov
Subject:	RE: Speaker Invitation - Women in Energy and Infrastructure Conference
Date:	Thursday, September 14, 2017 11:37:18 AM
Attachments:	WilmerHale Event Information- Women in Energy and Infrastructure Conference.pdf

Kate, thanks again for agreeing to participate as a panelist at our Women in Energy and Infrastructure conference in November. Attached to this email is a brief overview of the conference with answers the typical questions from agency ethics offices regarding undertakings of this nature. We hope this will help you with your approval process.

Since our last email exchange, Senator Lisa Murkowski has confirmed as our keynote speaker and the following have accepted our invitation to speak (pending ethics clearance):

- Karen Hawbecker, Associate Solicitor at U.S. Department of the Interior
- Molly Ward, Secretary of Natural Resources for Virginia
- Amanda Neely, General Counsel to Senator Rob Portman and Deputy Chief Counsel at U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
- Angie Colamaria, Permitting Team Lead at the Office of Management and Budget

Thanks again,

Bonnie Heiple | WilmerHale
617-526-6745

From: Heiple, Bonnie
Sent: Saturday, September 9, 2017 2:01 PM
To: Katharine MacGregor <katharine_macgregor@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Martin, Timothy <Timothy.Martin@wilmerhale.com>; Tracie Lassiter <tracie_lassiter@ios.doi.gov>; ymackthompson@blm.gov
Subject: Re: Speaker Invitation - Women in Energy and Infrastructure Conference

Wonderful! We'll stay tuned for final sign off from your ethics folks, but otherwise plan on your participation. Look forward to meeting you.

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Bonnie Heiple | WilmerHale
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Bonnie.Heiple@wilmerhale.com

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AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

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> Thanks,
>
> **Bonnie Heiple | WilmerHale**
> 60 State Street
> Boston, MA 02109
> 617-526-6745
> Bonnie.Heiple@wilmerhale.com

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Bob McFarlin
To: kbenedetto@blm.gov
Subject: RE: TMM Comment Letter to USFS
Date: Thursday, March 1, 2018 11:21:53 PM
Attachments: Twin Metals Comment Letter Final 022718.pdf

Hi Kathy,

Here is just the comment letter. Apparently, the congressional e-mail system won't deliver the attachments - file is too large. If you would like the attachments, let me know.

Bob McFarlin
Government Affairs Advisor
Twin Metals Minnesota
380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
St. Paul, MN 55102
612-655-2099 (c)

www.Twin-Metals.com

From: Bob McFarlin
Sent: Thursday, March 01, 2018 10:15 PM
To: 'kbenedetto@blm.gov' <kbenedetto@blm.gov>
Subject: TMM Comment Letter to USFS

Hi Kathy,

FYI - Attached is the latest Twin Metals comment letter to the US Forest Service on the withdrawal issue.

Bob McFarlin
Government Affairs Advisor
Twin Metals Minnesota
380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
St. Paul, MN 55102
612-655-2099 (c)

www.Twin-Metals.com

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From:	Rebecca Rom
To:	David Bernhardt; James Cason; Joe Balash
Cc:	Gareth Rees; bstead@blm.gov; Michael Nedd; Karen Mouritsen; Dean Gettinger; Strohl, Derek; James Hubbard; Doug Crandall; Vicki Christiansen; Chris French; Jennifer Eberlien; Robert Harper; Nick Douglas; Kathleen Atkinson; Shawn Olson; Connie Cummins; Matt Judd; bsteed@blm.gov
Subject:	Re: Twin Metals Lease Renewal EA - Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
Date:	Tuesday, January 22, 2019 4:09:10 PM
Attachments:	1-21-2019 Comment Letter of NMW, TWS, CBD, NPCA, SFBW, VNPA and Earthjustice on DOI-BLM-ES-030-2018-0002-EA - Renewal of Leases MNES-001352 and -001353.pdf

Good Afternoon - I write once again to request an extension of the extremely short and inadequate comment period for the Twin Metals Lease Renewal EA. Today is the last day of the comment period. The BLM e-comment portal has continued to be problematic throughout the day. For example, we are unable to submit the comment letter from conservation groups via the portal. Moreover, delivery to the Milwaukee BLM office has been unsuccessful. Federal Express informed us today that it cannot deliver our comments because the Milwaukee office is closed. As an alternative, we are today mailing a complete set of our comments from the conservation community to Brian Steed at 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC. A copy of these comments is attached to this email. The mailed comments include an appendix of additional submittals that are not attached to this email because of size limitations. Our comments include not only the attached letter but also the appendix being delivered to Mr. Steed. Finally, we are also attempting personal delivery on Mr. Steed.

As a consequence of the failure of the BLM to allow for either electronic or physical delivery of comments from citizens who are rightly gravely concerned about renewal of mineral leases in the watershed of the Boundary Waters, we again request an extension of the comment period. More than 181.000 citizens submitted comments during two comment periods on the now-cancelled FLPMA mineral withdrawal study for the Superior National Forest. It is likely that tens of thousands of citizens have been denied the opportunity to submit comments to the BLM on this rushed and clearly questionable attempt to renew cancelled mineral leases near the Boundary Waters.

Thank you for considering this request.

Becky Rom

> On Jan 22, 2019, at 9:15 AM, Rebecca Rom (b) (6) wrote:
>
> Good Morning - I write to reiterate my request for an extension of the comment period for the Twin Metals Lease Renewal EA. The BLM e-planning page has been down since Sunday, January 20th, the last three days of what is already an extremely short and inadequate comment period for a major decision that affects the fate of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Widerness, the nation's most visited national wilderness, and millions of Americans. Attached are screen shots of the e-planning page for yesterday and today, showing that the e-comment page is down. The page was also down on Sunday, Jan. 20th. We appreciate your consideration of the numerous requests for extension.
>
> Becky Rom

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

<BLM_eplanning_page_Screen Shot 2019-01-22 at 8.43.52 AM.pdf>
<BLM_eplanning_page_Screen Shot 2019-01-21 at 3.43.26 PM.pdf>

On Jan 21, 2019, at 3:51 PM, Rebecca Rom (b) (6) wrote:

Dear Acting Secretary Bernhardt, Associate Deputy Secretary Cason, and Assistant Secretary Balash:

I write to you today with an urgent request to extend the 30-day comment period for the Environmental Assessment on Twin Metals Lease Renewals. The comment period is currently scheduled to end tomorrow, Tuesday, January 22nd. Today, January 21, is the second to the last day of the comment period. Comments are directed to the BLM e-planning page. **The BLM e-planning page is down today and comments cannot be inputed into the BLM e-comment page. This is at least the seventh day during the 30-day comment period during which the BLM e-planning page for the Twin Metals Lease Renewal EA has been down and comments were not allowed. Citizens who are attempting to comment are being blocked by the BLM from submitting their comments.**

I believe that the BLM and the Department of Interior has received many requests from citizens requesting a longer comment period on this EA for reasons of the gravity of the proposed BLM action, the difficulties of providing comments over the holidays, the barriers to providing comments because of the periodic shutdown of the BLM e-planning page over the comment period, and the difficulties resulting from the partial federal government shutdown.

We respectfully request an extension of the comment period for an additional 60-days plus an additional day for every day of the partial federal government shutdown.

Attached to this email are requests from members of Congress and the Minnesota Attorney General, as well as groups that represent over 18 million people.

Attached here are two requests for a 60-day comment period from U.S. Senators Klobuchar and Smith:

<2018 12 13 Klobuchar Smith BLM EA Public Comment Letter.pdf>
<20190118 Klobuchar_Smith_BLM Comment Period Extension Letter.pdf>
Attached here is a letter from Members of the U.S. House of Representatives:
<19 0118 DOI Bernhardt on TMM lease draft EA comments.pdf>
Attached here is a letter from Minnesota's Attorney General:

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

<Ellsion 2019-1-18 letter Bernhardt - Jan 18 2019 - 12-17.pdf>
Attached here are two letters from the conservation community:
<Twin Metals Lease Renewal Public Comment Extension Request_final.pdf>
<Twin Metals Lease Renewal Gov Shutdown Impacts Letter_final.pdf>
Attached here is a letter from groups representing hunters and anglers:
<BWCA BLM lease comment period FINAL.pdf>

We would appreciate your urgent consideration of the requests to extend the comment period and a notice of your decision at your earliest opportunity.

Thank you.

Becky Rom
National Chair, Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters
Ely, MN
218.297.0360 (home)
612.961.1059 (mobile)

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Benedetto, Kathleen
To: Bob McFarlin; Linda Thurn
Subject: Re: Twin Metals Letter
Date: Monday, June 12, 2017 6:21:58 PM

I'm going to be on the hill Friday Morning. I could do a 4:00 pm. I've copied Linda Thurn on this email, she can help figure out a time. KB

On Mon, Jun 12, 2017 at 4:14 PM, Bob McFarlin <bmcfarlin@twin-metals.com> wrote:

> Hi Kathy,
>
> Would you have a few minutes for a meeting this Friday? I would like to discuss the new upcoming USFS-BLM public hearings in Minnesota, Twin Metals' new project information and other updates. I will be in DC Wed. afternoon through Friday.
>
> Bob McFarlin
>
> Government Affairs Advisor
>
> Twin Metals Minnesota
>
> 380 St. Peter St., Suite 705
>
> St. Paul, MN 55102
>
> 612-655-2099 (c)
>
> www.Twin-Metals.com
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Bob McFarlin
> **Sent:** Wednesday, June 07, 2017 12:40 PM
> **To:** 'Benedetto, Kathleen' <kathleen_benedetto@ios.doi.gov>
> **Subject:** RE: Twin Metals Letter
>
> Hi Kathy,

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

Just left you a voice mail.

Bob McFarlin

Government Affairs Advisor

Twin Metals Minnesota

380 St. Peter St., Suite 705

St. Paul, MN 55102

612-655-2099 (c)

www.Twin-Metals.com

From: Bob McFarlin
Sent: Friday, June 02, 2017 8:45 AM
To: 'Benedetto, Kathleen' <kathleen_benedetto@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Twin Metals Letter

Hi Kathy,

You may already be aware of the attached letter sent this week from Twin Metals to Dept. of Interior Secretary Zinke and Dept. of Agriculture Secretary Perdue. The letter outlines Twin Metals' position that the withdrawal of federal lands in northeast Minnesota from future mining exploration and development as proposed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is illegal, and requests that the withdrawal proposal be rescinded by USFS or rejected by BLM. Twin Metals will also address the illegality of the withdrawal proposal and other issues in our formal comments to the USFS prior to the conclusion of the current public comment period in August. Thanks.

Bob McFarlin

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

Government Affairs Advisor

Twin Metals Minnesota

380 St. Peter St., Suite 705

St. Paul, MN 55102

612-655-2099 (c)

www.Twin-Metals.com

--
Kathleen Benedetto
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
(202) 208-5934

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Thurn, Linda
To: Bob McFarlin
Subject: Re: Twin Metals Letter
Date: Monday, June 12, 2017 8:47:13 PM

Dear Mr. McFarlin,

Please come to 1849 C Street NW Suite 5653, Washington, DC 20240 on Friday, June 16 at 4:00 pm Eastern Time. When you get to the guard's desk give them our office number: 202-208-3801.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you,
Linda Thurn
Executive Assistant
Bureau of Land Management
202-208-3801

On Mon, Jun 12, 2017 at 6:21 PM, Benedetto, Kathleen <kathleen_benedetto@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

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AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

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Bob McFarlin

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Bob McFarlin

Government Affairs Advisor

Twin Metals Minnesota

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St. Paul, MN 55102

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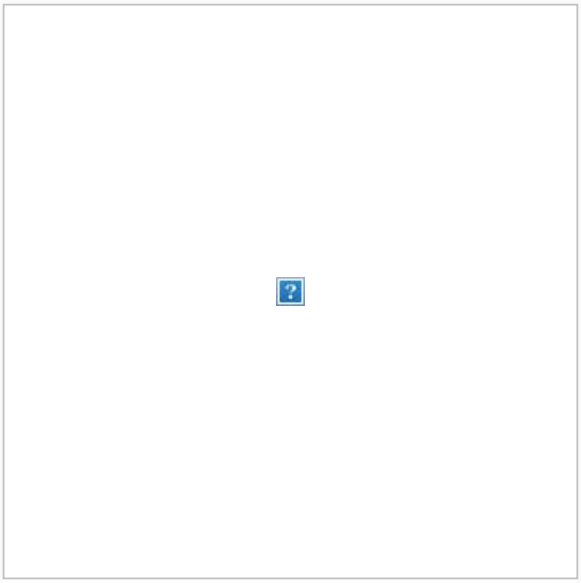
www.Twin-Metals.com

--
Kathleen Benedetto
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
(202) 208-5934

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

From: Emilio Navarrete
To: Timonthy Spisak
Subject: Stopping Extremist Groups From Profiting Off the American Taxpayer
Date: Friday, May 17, 2019 5:09:43 PM

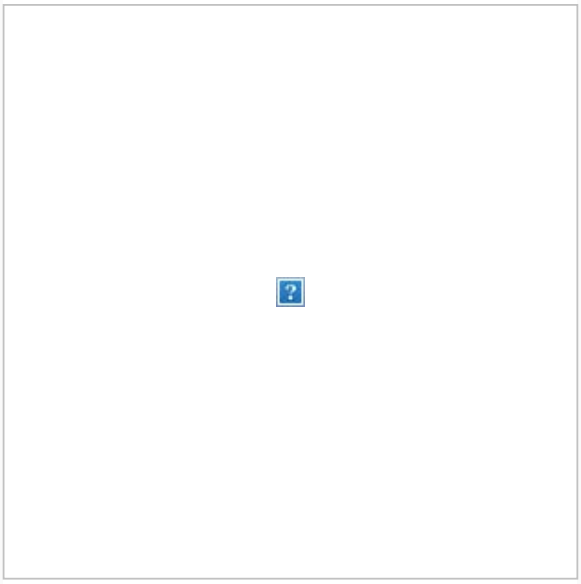
No Images? Click here



Western Caucus Reboot

Week of 05.13.19

Attorney's Fees and Costs To Be Made Available to the American People Thanks To Interior Action



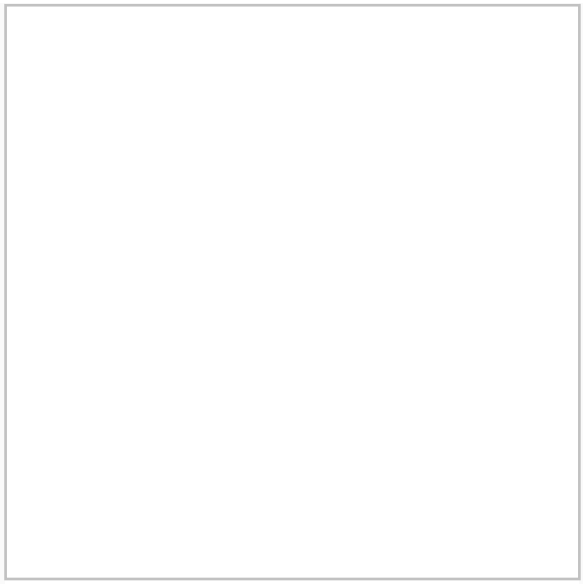
For years, extremist environmental groups filing frivolous litigation have

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milked taxpayers for tens of millions of dollars. Federal agencies didn't even track EAJA payments for more than two decades and could not provide Congress with amounts or even the names of parties that were receiving taxpayer-funded payouts. Special-interest lawyers were allowed to bill federal agencies at exorbitant rates as high as $750 an hour. A Daily Caller News Foundation investigation revealed American taxpayers footed the bill for more than "$49 million as a result of 512 citizen suits filed under three major environmental laws during the Obama Administration." Attorney's fees and costs will finally be made available online thanks to DOI's action. These directives will prevent sue-and-settle abuse and ensure much needed accountability.

Click here for more

Western Caucus Efforts Reinstate Two MN Leases that Were Politically Cancelled by the Obama Administration

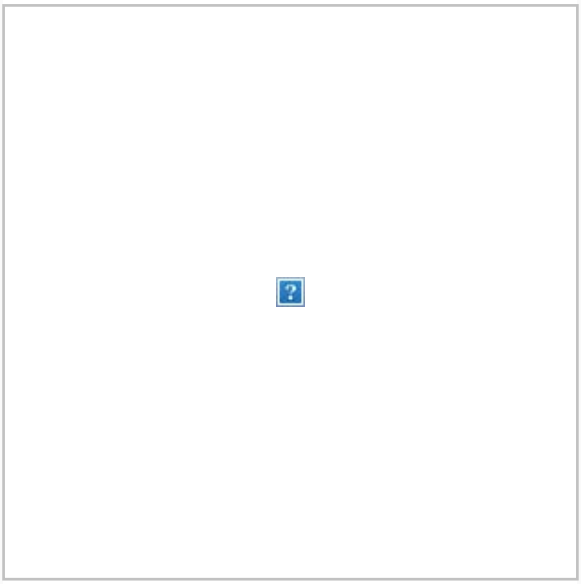


Thanks to Western Caucus efforts and Reps. Pete Stauber (MN-08) and Tom Emmer (MN-06), the Department of the Interior reinstated two Twin Metals Minnesota LLC-held hardrock mineral leases located on the Superior National Forest in Northern Minnesota. These leases were originally signed in 1966 and renewed without controversy in 1989 and 2004. However, the anti-mining Obama Administration cancelled these two leases for political reasons and also imposed a 425,000 acre land grab that locked up these lands and stopped responsible development. 17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages, $2.5 billion annually for our economy and a total of four billion tons of strategic-and-critical-mineral-containing ore were at risk if these political anti-mining actions by the Obama Administration were not over overturned.

Click here for more

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

House Democrats Release Partisan Interior and Energy & Water Appropriations Bills

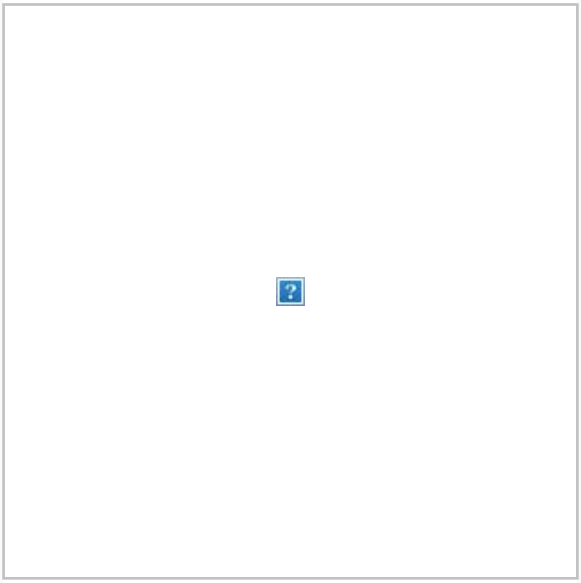


This week, partisan appropriations bills were released by the House Democratic Appropriations Committee in the form of the fiscal year 2020 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill and the fiscal year 2020 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies bill. These partisan bills blow through spending caps, impose new fees and policies that will kill jobs, restrict drilling in ANWR, prevent responsible offshore energy production, stop agencies from reorganizing to maximize efficiency and save taxpayer money, increase funding to file frivolous lawsuits against job creators and fail to include active forest management provisions that will help prevent catastrophic wildfires.

Click here for more

Bernhardt On BLM Move West:

'That's Going To Happen'



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Secretary Bernhardt's efforts to reorganize the Department!

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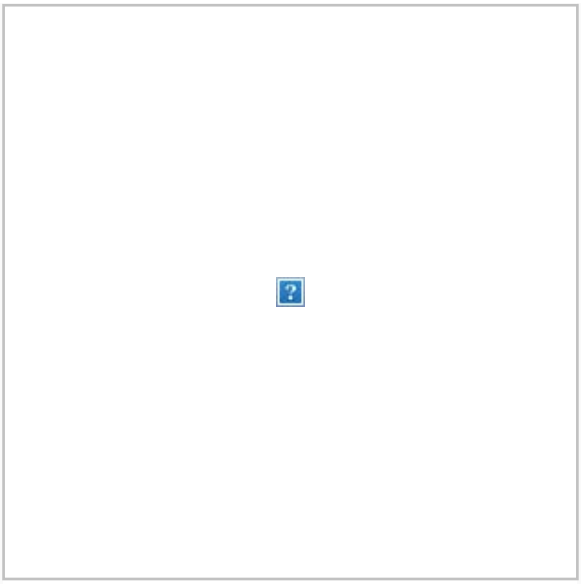
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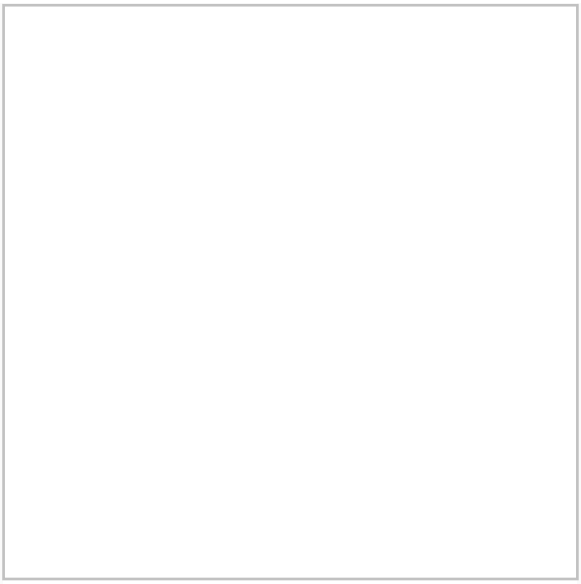
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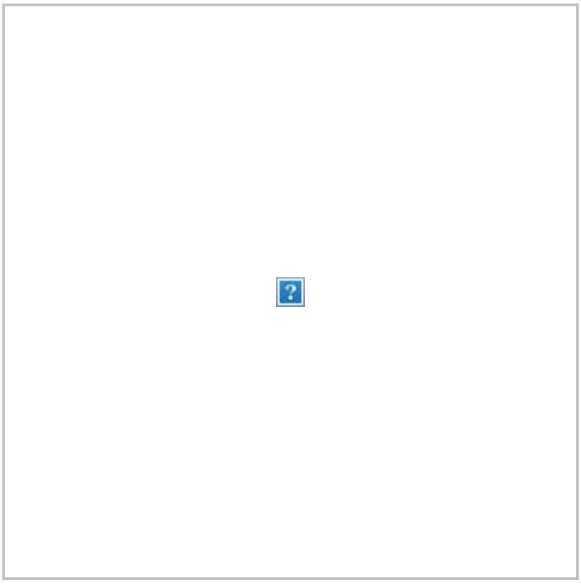


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To: Kathleen Benedetto
Subject: Stopping Extremist Groups From Profiting Off the American Taxpayer
Date: Friday, May 17, 2019 5:09:39 PM

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Week of 05.13.19

Attorney's Fees and Costs To Be Made Available to the American People Thanks To Interior Action

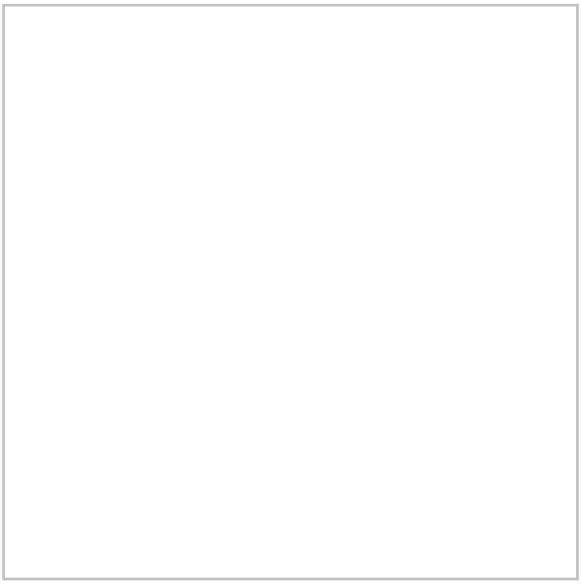
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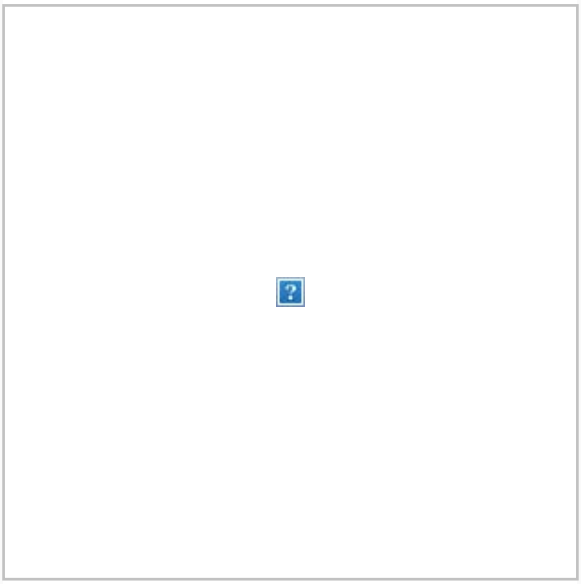


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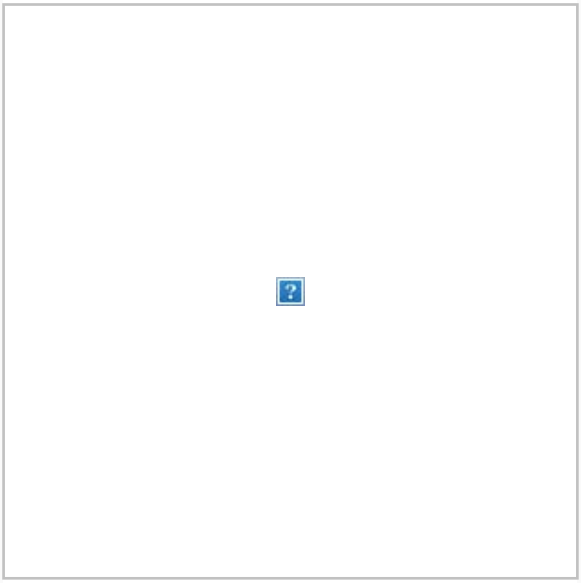


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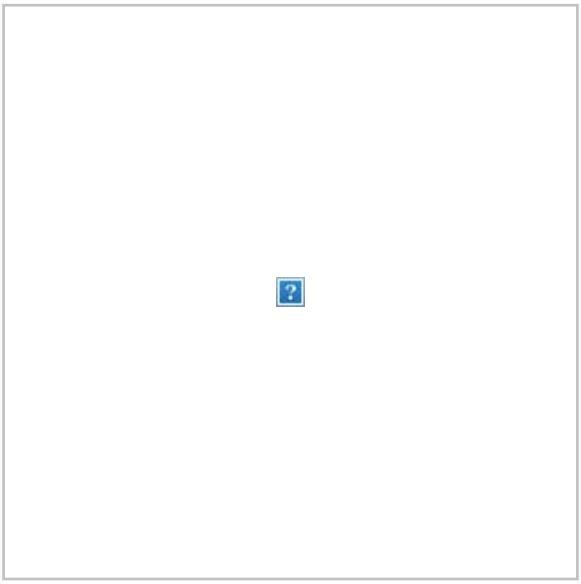
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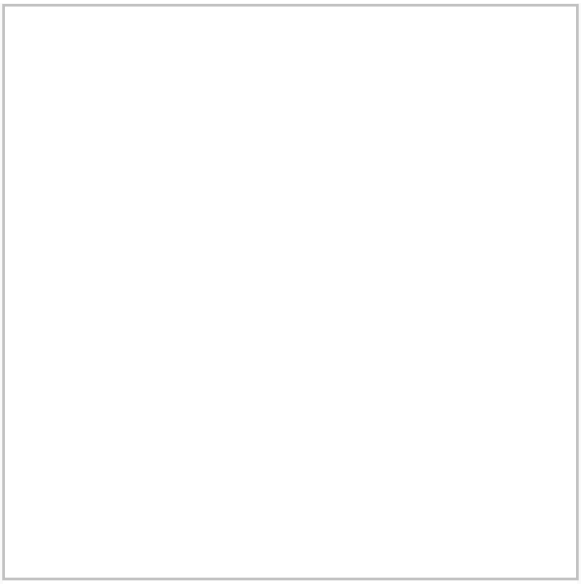
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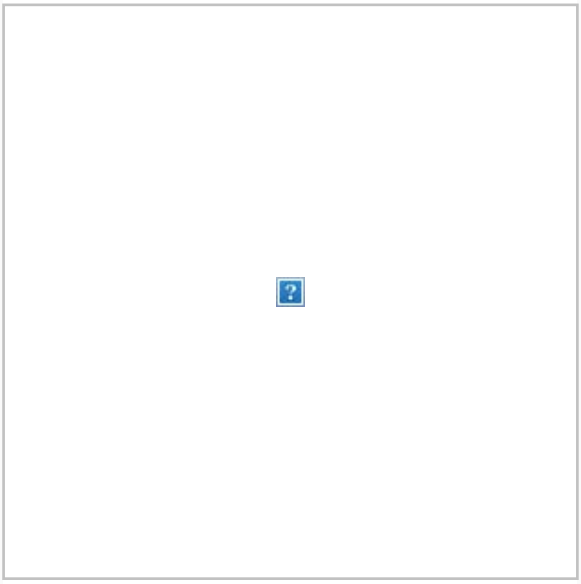


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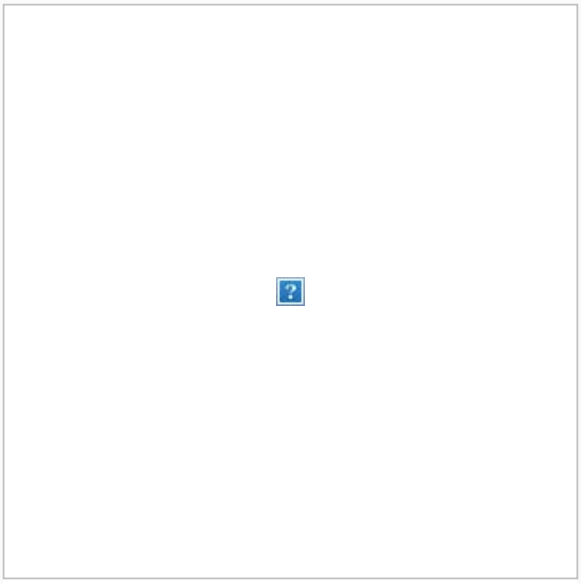
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To: Kristin Bail
Subject: Stopping Extremist Groups From Profiting Off the American Taxpayer
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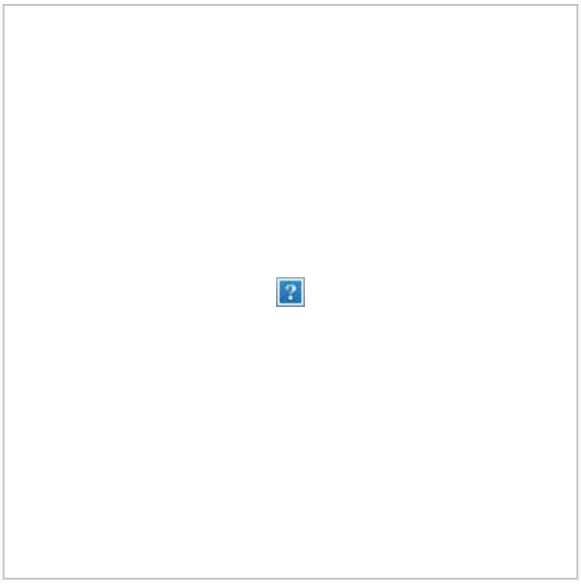
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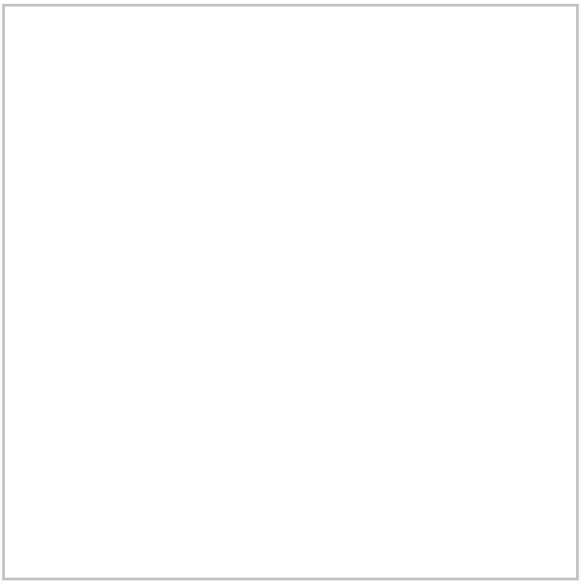
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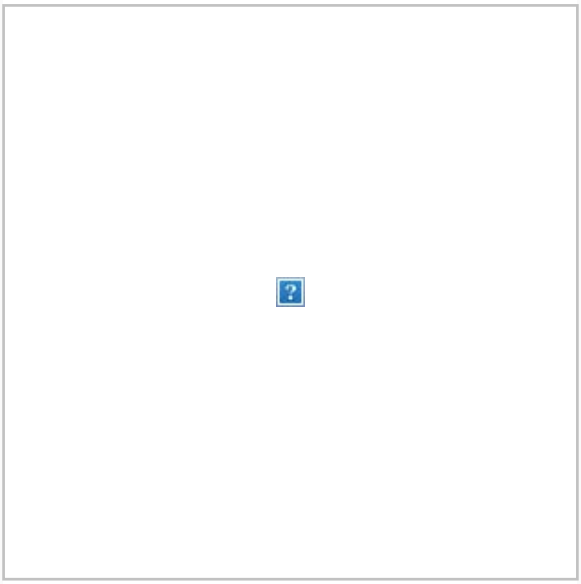


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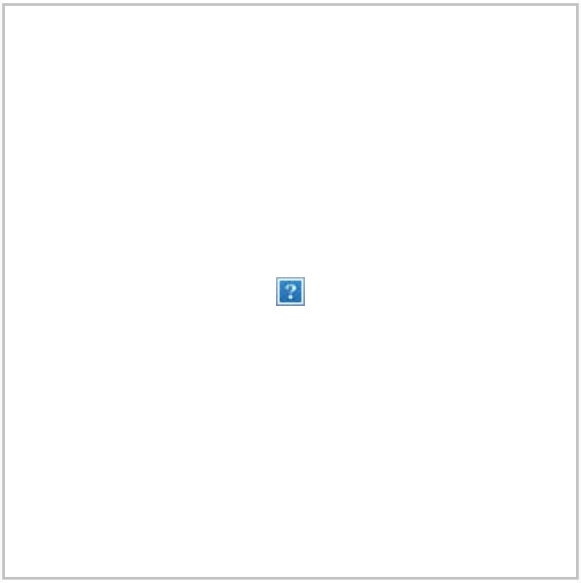


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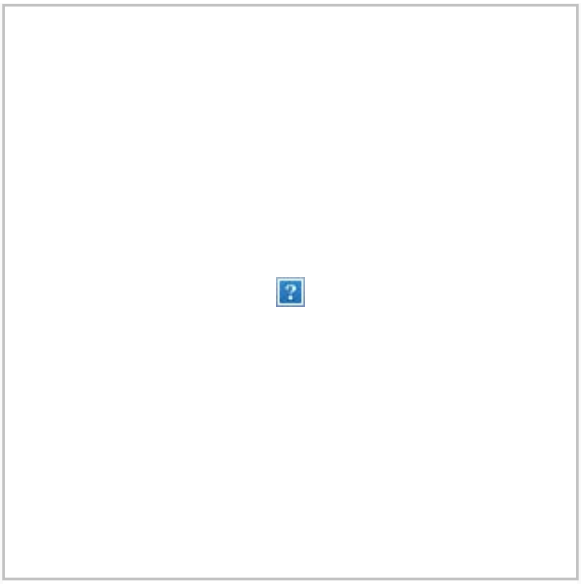
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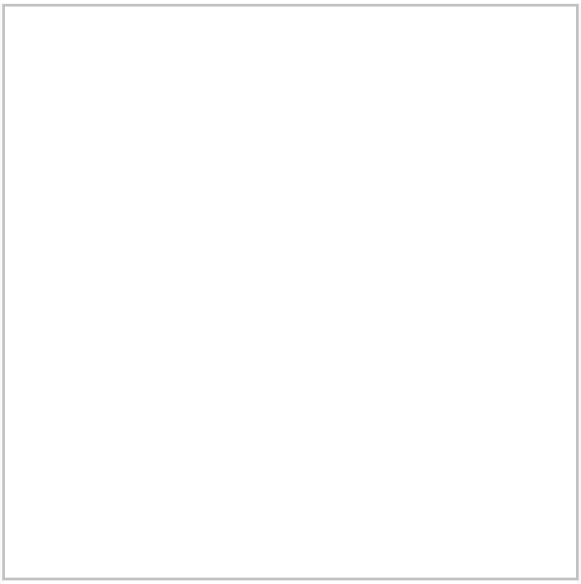
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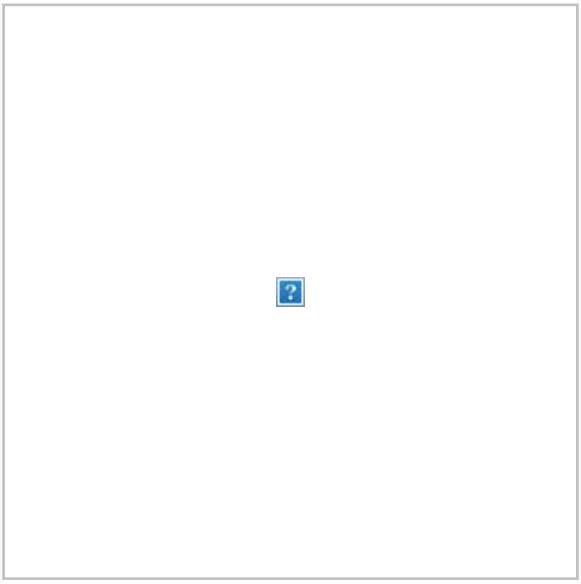


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From:	Block, Molly
To:	Joe Balash; Dove, William; Casey Hammond; Bernhardt, David; Todd Willens; MacGregor, Katharine; James Cason; Amanda Kaster
Cc:	Taylor Playforth; Cole Rojewski; Aaron Thiele; Russell Newell; Bockmier, John; Alex Hinson; Vander Voort, Faith; Nicholas Goodwin
Subject:	Twin metals coverage
Date:	Wednesday, May 15, 2019 5:55:38 PM

Twin Metals Coverage

(ASLM Quoted) Associated Press: "Federal Agency Renews Twin Metals Mine Leases in Minnesota"
(ASLM Quoted) Duluth News Tribune: "Trump Administration Renews Twin Metals Mining Leases"
(ASLM Quoted) Minnesota Star Tribune: "Twin Metals Wins Renewal of Federal Mining Leases in Northeastern Minnesota"
(ALSM Quoted) WDIO (ABC): "Trump Administration Renews Twin Metals Mining Leases"
KBJR6 (NBC): "Feds sign off on Twin Metals mining lease renewal"
(ASLM Quoted) E&E News: "Interior Renews Twin Metal Leases"
(ASLM Quoted) Reuters: "Trump administration opens up Minnesota wilderness area to copper mining"

Congressional/Social Media

- Congressman Stauber Tweet + Press Release
- Congressman Emmer Tweet + Press Release
- Minnesota Senate Republican Caucus: Press Release
- Congressman Rob Bishop: Press Release/Statement
- Western Caucus: Tweet + Press Release
- ASLM Joe Balash
- Minnesota Miners/Patricia Hammes Tweets

Full Text

Federal Agency Renews Twin Metals Mine Leases in Minnesota

Associated Press
Jeff Baenen

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The federal Bureau of Land Management on Wednesday renewed mineral rights leases for a proposed Twin Metals copper-nickel mine in northeastern Minnesota, a project that environmentalists fear would spoil the pristine Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

Department of Interior Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral Management Joe Balash renewed the leases following a 41-day public review and comment period.

"Mining on public lands balances conservation strategies and policies with the need to produce minerals that add value to the lives of all Americans by providing raw materials used in the manufacture of medical aids, automobiles, smartphones and computers, and household appliances," Balash said in a statement. "Mining strategic metals in the United States is beneficial to national security, national and local economies, and job creation."

The leases cover land in the Superior National Forest 9 miles (14 kilometers) southeast of Ely that

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encompasses vast reserves of copper, nickel and precious metals.

According to Twin Metals Minnesota, the renewed leases add new conditions, including higher annual royalty payments, project milestones and additional environmental requirements.

Twin Metals Minnesota CEO Kelly Osborne calls the lease renewal “a critical step” for the company to present its proposal for an underground mine.

“It’s very good news for us and for the communities in northeastern Minnesota who look forward to the hundreds of jobs and major economic development this mine will bring,” Osborne said in a statement.

Twin Metals, which is owned by the Chilean mining company Antofagasta, said it plans to submit its mine proposal to state and federal agencies in the coming months for environmental and scientific review.

Environmental groups are fighting the project, fearing mining would spoil the nearby Boundary Waters Canoe Area, the country’s most-visited wilderness. Nine area businesses who contend the project would hurt their business are suing in federal court to block the leases. No hearing is scheduled yet, but Jeremy Drucker of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters expects a hearing in early fall.

Tom Landwehr , the campaign’s executive director and former commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, called the announcement “a continuation of the Trump Administration’s assault on the Boundary Waters Wilderness,” and said the review was “wholly insufficient to determine the impact of sulfide-copper mining on land immediately adjacent to the Boundary Waters.”

The copper, nickel and precious metals under northeastern Minnesota are bound up in sulfide ores that can release sulfuric acid and heavy metals when exposed to air and water.

In September, the Trump administration said it would allow copper mining near the Boundary Waters, reversing a decision made in the final days of the Obama administration. In late 2016, the Obama administration withdrew about 234,000 acres of the Rainy River watershed near Ely from eligibility for mineral leasing pending a two-year study. President Donald Trump said at a campaign rally in Duluth last June that his administration would rescind the withdrawal.

Minnesota Republican Reps. Pete Stauber and Tom Emmer were with Balash when he signed and renewed the leases. Both praised the action.

“In northern Minnesota, mining is our past, our present, and our future,” said Stauber, who represents the area.

Emmer said he is “pleased that the Trump administration acknowledges that we can responsibly develop our state’s resources — bringing jobs back to this region — without destroying the forests,

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lakes and streams that all Minnesotans hold dear."

Trump Administration Renews Twin Metals Mining Leases
John Myers
Duluth News Tribune

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management on Wednesday said it has formally renewed mineral exploration leases for Twin Metals, the Chilean-owned mining company hoping to build a large underground copper-nickel mine near Ely.

The 10-year lease renewal gives Twin Metals renewed access to national forest land on which to search for minerals and prepare to develop a mining project.

The Obama administration had put those leases on hold pending an environmental review. But the Trump administration for months now has been moving to clear the path for Twin Metals, in what could be the state's second major copper mine after Polymet, the open pit mine proposed about 30 miles away near Hoyt Lakes.

A company statement said the renewed leases are the next step before Twin Metals submits a detailed project plan for its $3 billion mine and processing operations just outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness expected to employ some 850 people.

That formal mining proposal could be submitted to state and federal agencies in a matter of months, the company said Wednesday.

"This lease renewal is a critical step to allow us to present a proposal for our underground mine project," said Kelly Osborne, Twin Metals chief executive officer. "It's very good news for us and for the communities in Northeastern Minnesota who look forward to the hundreds of jobs and major economic development this mine will bring."

The BLM said it received more than 39,000 comments during a public input period on Twin Metals over the winter and that those comments spurred changes in the "terms and conditions of the leases, as well as to add environmentally protective stipulations'' before they were renewed.

According to a statement from the agency, if and when Twin Metals Minnesota submits a formal proposal to develop a mine, the agency would undertake a detailed environmental impact statement that would "thoroughly analyze the potential environmental impacts from the proposed mine."

To prevent the Superior National Forest land in question, generally near the Kawishiwi River along Minnesota Highway 1, from being indefinitely tied up by the leases with no action, the terms placed on the renewed leases include new diligent development requirements, whereby the lessee is obligated to submit a complete, proposed mine plan of operations, obtain all necessary permits, and meet certain project milestones for mine construction within this ten-year term, or the leases will be terminated."

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The BLM said the new terms also disallow the use of strip mining, rim cutting or open pit mining methods, among other environmentally protective measures. The company has always said it would use mostly underground mining to harvest the minerals.

"Mining on public lands balances conservation strategies and policies with the need to produce minerals that add value to the lives of all Americans by providing raw materials used in the manufacture of medical aids, automobiles, smart phones and computers, and household appliances," said Joe Balasg, assistant Interior Secretary who oversees the BLM, in a statement Wednesday. "Under President Trump's leadership... this action may reduce the vulnerability to disruption of critical mineral supplies if it leads to the development and production of critical minerals in an environmentally responsible, regulatory-consistent, and economically feasible manner. Mining strategic metals in the United States is beneficial to national security, national and local economies, and job creation."

Critics, however, said the administration is rushing headlong toward a potential disaster for the region's water-rich environment and the adjacent BWCAW. There's concern over various pollution and disruption to the BWCAW, especially acidic runoff that could spoil the pristine lakes and rivers in the area.

"Today's announcement by the Bureau of Land Management is a continuation of the Trump administration's assault on the Boundary Waters Wilderness,'' said Tom Landwehr, executive director of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters. "The 'review' completed by the administration was wholly insufficient to determine the impact of sulfide-ore copper mining on land immediately adjacent to the Boundary Waters."

Under the Obama administration in 2016, the Forest Service concluded that copper mining posed "an inherent risk of irreparable harm to an irreplaceable Wilderness." Critics of copper mining in the area noted the Trump administration cancelled a more complete study that would have fully determined the extent of that harm.

"It is now more clear than ever that the Trump administration is steamrolling the American people and allowing a foreign mining company to write the rules when it comes to America's most popular wilderness,'' Landwehr said in a statement.

Supporters say the project can advance without environmental harm and will expand the region's economy.

"In northern Minnesota, mining is our past, our present, and our future," said U.S. Rep. Pete Stauber, who represents Northeastern Minnesota. "With 21st century technology, we can responsibly develop the resources needed for the modern world and unleash the economic engine of Northeastern Minnesota."

Twin Metals Wins Renewal of Federal Mining Leases in Northeastern Minnesota
Jennifer Bjorhus

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

Minnesota Star Tribune

Interior Department ruling cheers mining supporters, greeted as 'abominable' by environmentalists.

In a long-anticipated but highly controversial move, the Trump Administration has officially renewed two federal minerals leases for the proposed Twin Metals copper-nickel mine on the edge of the Boundary Waters in northeastern Minnesota.

It's a significant step in the state's yearslong battle over opening up Minnesota to minerals mining, and it clears the way for Twin Metals to become the second major mine seeking state regulatory approval.

In announcing the decision Wednesday, the U.S. Department of the Interior said minerals mining benefits national security and the economy.

"Mining on public lands balances conservation ... with the need to produce minerals that add value to the lives of all Americans by providing raw materials used in the manufacture of medical aids, automobiles, smartphones and computers, and household appliances," said Joe Balash, Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management.

U.S. Rep. Pete Stauber, a Republican from Duluth, commended the renewals and brushed aside concerns raised by state and national conservation groups.

"In northeastern Minnesota, mining is our past, present, and our future," Stauber said in a statement. "We know that with modern technology, we can develop the resources that all Americans utilize and create a boon for Minnesota, while preserving our precious environment."

At issue is the underground copper-nickel mine that Twin Metals Minnesota, a St. Paul based subsidiary of Chilean mining company Antofagasta, wants to build about nine miles southeast of Ely, in the Superior National Forest.

The Obama administration terminated Twin Metals' federal minerals leases in 2016, arguing that the lease language did not require them to be renewed and that hard-rock metal mining posed too many environmental risks so close to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), the nation's most visited protected wilderness. After robust lobbying by Antofagasta, Trump's Interior Department reversed course last year.

The about-face is being litigated in federal court in the District of Columbia, but there are no stays associated with the action. The lease renewals open the door for Twin Metals to start its formal permitting process with the state.

Twin Metals issued a statement calling the lease renewals "a critical step" in moving the project forward.

"It's very good news for us and for the communities in northeastern Minnesota who look forward to

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the hundreds of jobs and major economic development this mine will bring," said Twin Metals Minnesota chief executive Kelly Osborne.

The St. Paul based company said it has spent $450 million developing the mine, and will submit its mine proposal to state and federal agencies "in coming months." That step will start environmental reviews.

The lease renewals triggered a cascade of denunciations from conservation groups and other mine opponents.

"Is no place sacred?" asked National Wildlife Federation president and chief executive Collin O'Mara in a statement.

"This abominable decision to reissue expired permits to sulfide-ore copper mining in a place so pristine you cannot use a motorized boat shows the depths of the Department of the Interior's imbalance toward mining at all costs," O'Mara said.

Tom Landwehr, the former Department of Natural Resources commissioner who now heads The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters, accused federal regulators of "ignoring science and legal process."

"I'm outraged at the way that the Trump Administration is treating the Boundary Waters and the wilderness," Landwehr said in an interview.

Landwehr said the Twin Metals leases were lawfully terminated in 2016, and that Twin Metals "doesn't have clear title to those leases." Given the importance of the Boundary Waters and the high risk of environmental damage from a copper mine in the same watershed, the controversy "is right in the Top 10 of most important issues facing Minnesota," Landwehr said.

U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, a Democrat from St. Paul and vigorous mine opponent, issued a strongly worded statement decrying the pollution track record of minerals mines and vowing to challenge Interior's decision.

"The rush to issue mineral leases to Twin Metals and allow them to pursue sulfide-ore mining within the watershed of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) is shortsighted and irresponsible," McCollum said. "As the most visited wilderness area in America, the BWCA is a unique, iconic, and irreplaceable national treasure that must be protected."

The Twin Metals copper-nickel mine is one of two hotly contested copper-nickel mines proposed for northeastern Minnesota, home to one of the world's largest untapped mineral reserves.

The mines would be the state's first hard-rock metals mines, a type of mining that carries far greater environmental risks than mining for taconite or iron ore because copper is extracted from sulfur-bearing ore that, when exposed to oxygen or water, generates toxic sulfuric acid — often called acid mine drainage — that can pollute nearby waters.

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Most copper mining in the U.S. is done in arid regions, such as Arizona. A 2012 study by the environmental group Earthworks found that of 14 U.S. copper-sulfide mines reviewed, all had pipeline spills or other types of accidental releases. Nine of the 14 experienced tailings spills.

The other copper mine proposed for northeast Minnesota is much further along, having received all the required state permits. That project is being developed by PolyMet Mining Inc., a Hoyt Lakes affiliate of Swiss-based conglomerate Glencore. It wants to build an open-pit copper mine at an existing taconite site south of Babbitt. The project faces numerous legal challenges.

Trump Administration Renews Twin Metals Mining Leases
WDIO (ABC)

The Bureau of Land Management has renewed mineral rights leases for the proposed Twin Metals copper-nickel mine near Ely.

The BLM first announced its plans to formally renew the leases in December. That came after the Trump administration lifted a roadblock to renewing the leases that was imposed late during the Obama administration, which cited the risks of acid mine drainage to the nearby Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

The bureau said in December that it planned to impose updated stipulations on the leases from the U.S. Forest Service to mitigate risks to water resources and wilderness areas.

"Under President Trump's leadership and direction from the Secretary, this action may reduce the vulnerability to disruption of critical mineral supplies if it leads to the development and production of critical minerals in an environmentally responsible, regulatory-consistent, and economically feasible manner. Mining strategic metals in the United States is beneficial to national security, national and local economies, and job creation," Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash said in a news release.

Twin Metals still has to submit a formal mine plan, go through an environmental review, and obtain permits before beginning construction. The company said Wednesday that it will submit its mine proposal in the coming months.

"This lease renewal is a critical step to allow us to present a proposal for our underground mine project," said Kelly Osborne, Twin Metals chief executive officer, in a news release. "It's very good news for us and for the communities in northeastern Minnesota who look forward to the hundreds of jobs and major economic development this mine will bring."

Republican Congressmen Pete Stauber and Tom Emmer were present as Balash signed the leases Wednesday.

"With 21st century technology, we can responsibly develop the resources needed for the modern world and unleash the economic engine of northeastern Minnesota. Unfortunately, misinformed

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policies of the past have not only prevented the responsible development of our resources but have even prohibited companies like Twin Metals from even submitting a proposed mining plan," Stauber said in a news release.

However, Tom Landwehr, the executive director of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters, called the signing of the leases an "assault" on the BWCA and said the BLM's review was insufficient.

"In 2016 the Forest Service concluded that sulfide-ore copper mining posed 'an inherent risk of irreparable harm to an irreplaceable Wilderness' and last year the Trump Administration cancelled a study that would have confirmed this. It is now more clear than ever that the Trump Administration is steamrolling the American people and allowing a foreign mining company to write the rules when it comes to America's most popular Wilderness," Landwehr said in a news release.

Several environmental groups are suing to quash the leases.

Feds sign off on Twin Metals mining lease renewal
Kevin Jacobsen
KBJR6 (NBC)

The Bureau of Land Management on Wednesday renewed mineral rights leases for the proposed Twin Metals project near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

The approval comes months after the Trump administration reversed President Obama's mineral withdrawal.

President Obama's action proposed a 234,328 acre federal mineral withdrawal in the Superior National Forest for a 20-year term.

The leases cover land nine miles southeast of Ely where Twin Metals is hoping to tap into the world's largest untapped deposits of copper, nickel, and platinum group metals.

Rep. Pete Stauber, who was present for Wednesday's lease signing by Department of Interior Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral Management Joe Balash, said the milestone pushes Twin Metals one step closer to offering a mine plan of operation.

"This lease renewal is a critical step to allow us to present a proposal for our underground mine project," said Kelly Osborne, TMM chief executive officer. "It's very good news for us and for the communities in northeastern Minnesota who look forward to the hundreds of jobs and major economic development this mine will bring."

Environmental responded quickly to the announcement, saying the the review of the project completed by the Trump Administration was "wholly insufficient".

"(It's) a continuation of the Trump Administration's assault on the Boundary Waters Wilderness," Tom Landwehr, executive director of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters said.

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Twin Metals expects the project would directly employ 650 people and create an estimated 1,300 spin-off jobs.

Trump Administration Opens up Minnesota Wilderness Area to Copper Mining
Valerie Volcovici
Reuters

The U.S. Interior Department on Wednesday renewed two mineral leases near the Boundary Waters Wilderness area in Minnesota, a key step in opening the popular wilderness and recreation area up to copper mining despite heavy opposition from local and national conservation groups.

The department's Bureau of Land Management granted the hardrock mineral leases inside the Superior National Forest to Twin Metals Minnesota LLC, a subsidiary of Chile's Antofagasta, with the aim of expanding domestic mining of "critical minerals" used in common appliances and products, saying it is beneficial to national security because it reduces foreign imports.

"Mining strategic metals in the United States is beneficial to national security, national and local economies, and job creation," the Interior Department's assistant secretary Joe Balash said in a statement.

Twin Metals must now submit a formal mine plan of operation to the BLM, which will then analyze its potential environmental impacts.

The announcement riled conservation groups, who said the Trump administration conducted an insufficient environmental review process leading up to its approval.

The Obama administration in 2016 had implemented a moratorium on new mineral development in the area while it would conduct an extensive environmental impact statement (EIS) analysis to determine whether 234,000 acres of the watershed around Boundary Waters should be withdrawn from mining for up to 20 years.

But after President Donald Trump took office in 2017, he reversed course, canceling the EIS in favor of a less-demanding and faster environmental assessment last January.

The BLM said it got more than 39,000 comments during the 41 day EA review, which informed its decision, although the majority of those comments were in opposition to allowing mining.

Alison Flint, an attorney for the Wilderness Society said that the 40-page document with a one-page bibliography did not reference over two-dozen peer reviewed scientific studies that detail the impacts on wilderness.

"The rush to approve mining in the region and unwind science-based decision-making by the previous administration violates the law, disregards the science, and ignores widespread public opposition to mining in this beloved and vulnerable area, she said.

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Conservation and local groups, as well as some Minnesota lawmakers, have for years opposed the idea of opening up the area near the Boundary Waters to mining, because of the environmental risk it poses to the area's gray wolves, black bears, and moose and a variety of fish.

The Canadian government also raised concerns about the impact mining could have on Canada's water quality and ecosystems since the leases would be in shared U.S. and Canadian watersheds during the comment period on the environmental assessment.

The site attracts more visitors than any other U.S. wilderness area.

Interior Renews Twin Metal Leases
Dylan Brown
E&E News

The Trump administration renewed once-canceled leases today, paving the way for a controversial proposed copper-nickel mine in northeastern Minnesota.

The Interior Department granted a 10-year extension for two leases totaling 4,865 acres held by Twin Metals Minnesota LLC, a subsidiary of Chilean mining giant Antofagasta PLC.

In 2016, the Obama administration canceled the leases — first issued in 1966 — and proposed permanently banning mining on 234,000 surrounding acres in Superior National Forest to protect the nearby Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

But President Trump arrived in office promising to help the region's flagging mining industry, including Twin Metals and PolyMet Mining Corp.'s NorthMet mine, another copper-nickel project (Greenwire, April 16).

Last year, the Forest Service halted an environmental review of the mining ban. Interior pulled its mineral withdrawal application altogether and reinstated Twin Metals' leases.

Acting Interior solicitor Daniel Jorjani argued in a legal opinion that Interior did not have the right to reject the extension request, contradicting a similar Obama-era memo.

Environmentalists disagreed, arguing the original lease terms required mining to begin in the first 20 years, and promptly sued.

But Interior today maintained the renewal was "non-discretionary" (Greenwire, Dec. 10, 2018).

"Mining on public lands balances conservation strategies and policies with the need to produce minerals that add value to the lives of all Americans," Joe Balash, assistant Interior secretary for land and minerals management, said in a statement.

After reviewing more than 39,000 comments received during the public input period, Interior said it

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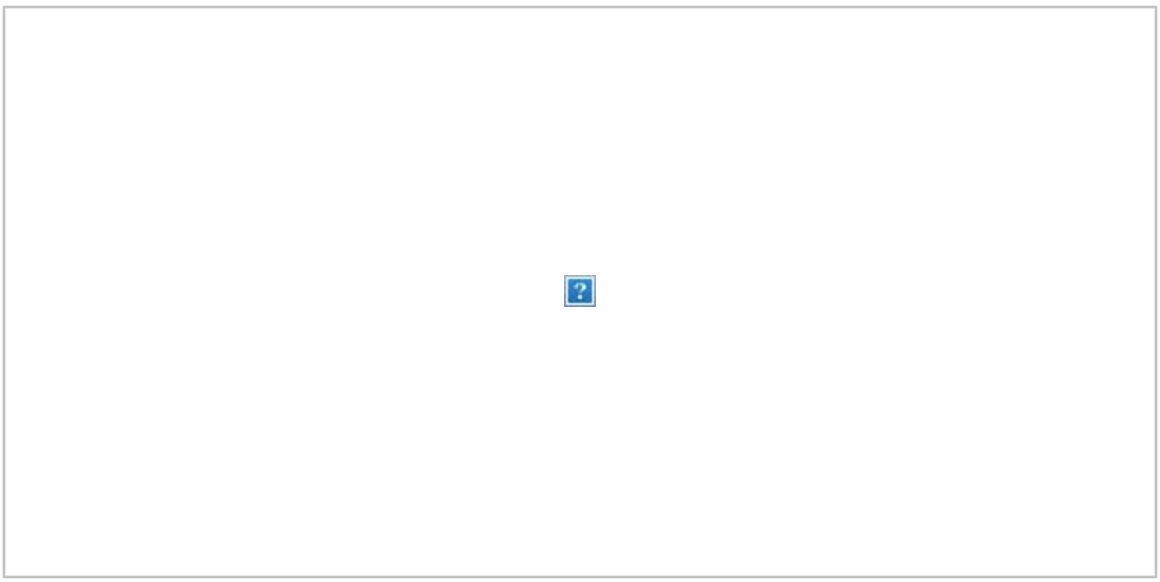
added new lease requirements. They include a provision terminating the leases if Twin Metals does not obtain all necessary permits in 10 years. The new terms also forbid the use of open-pit and strip mining.

But Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters Executive Director Tom Landwehr called the environmental assessment "wholly insufficient," citing a 2016 Forest Service analysis that found sulfide ore copper mining posed "an inherent risk of irreparable harm to an irreplaceable Wilderness."

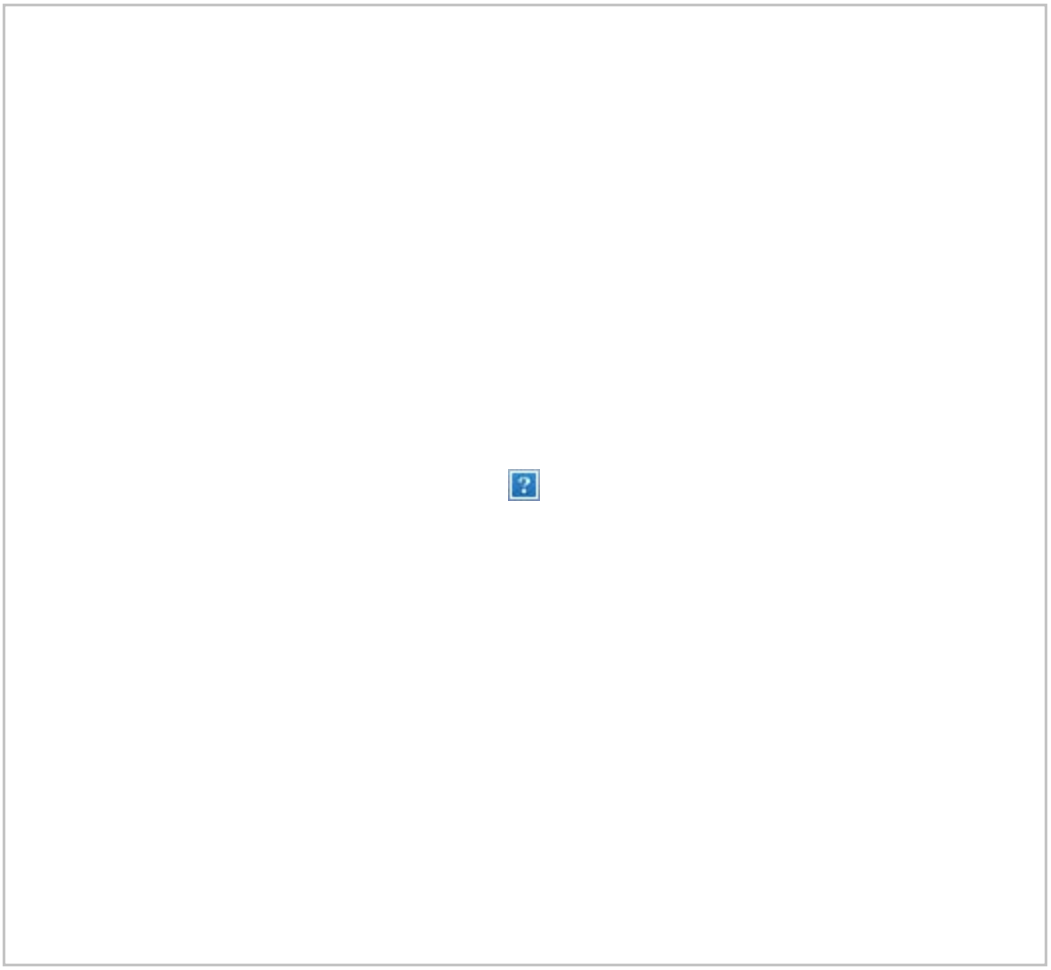
"The rush to approve mining in this region and unwind science-based decision-making by the previous administration violates the law, disregards the science and ignores widespread public opposition to mining in this beloved and vulnerable area," Wilderness Society attorney Alison Flint said in a statement.

Rep. Pete Stauber (R-Minn.), whom Trump campaigned for personally, applauded the administration for "rightfully returning to the process that was in place decades prior to the Obama administration's reckless political mineral withdrawal."

Twin Metals CEO Kelly Osborne added, "It's very good news for us and for the communities in northeastern Minnesota who look forward to the hundreds of jobs and major economic development this mine will bring."



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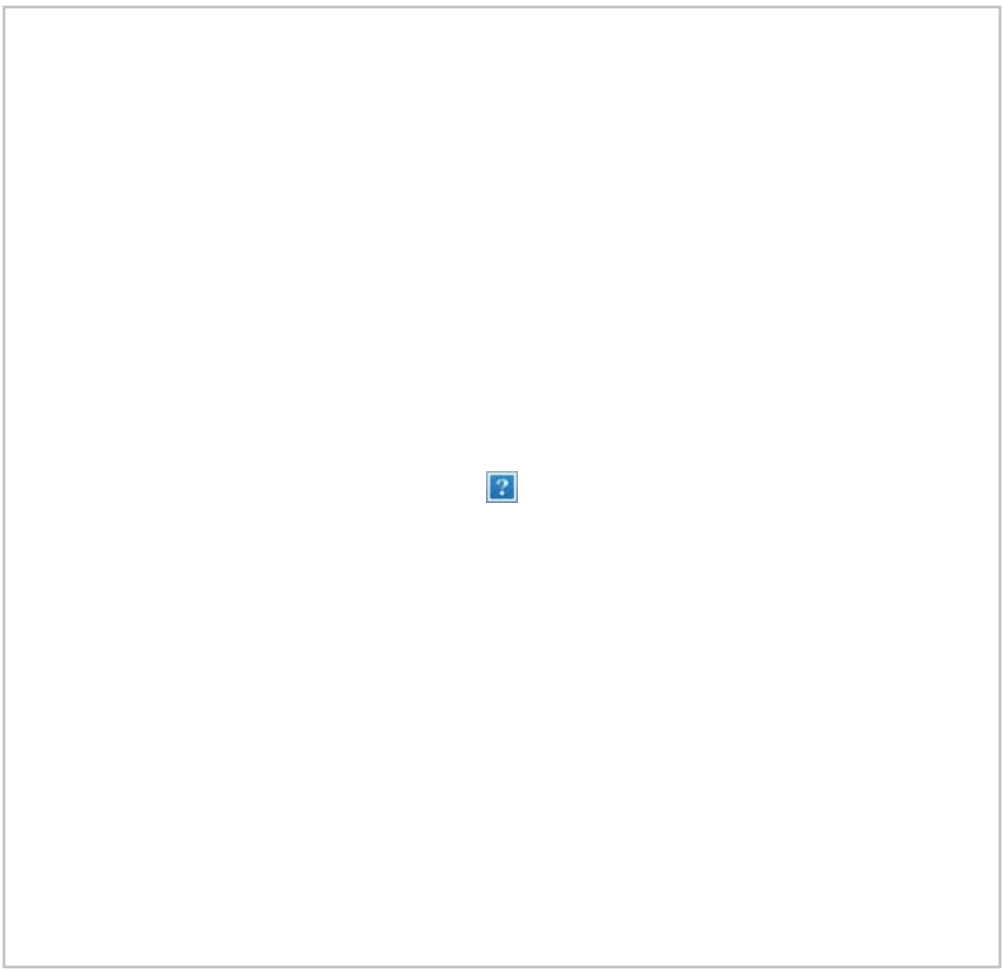


Bishop Statement on the Department of the Interior Reinstating Twin Metals Leases

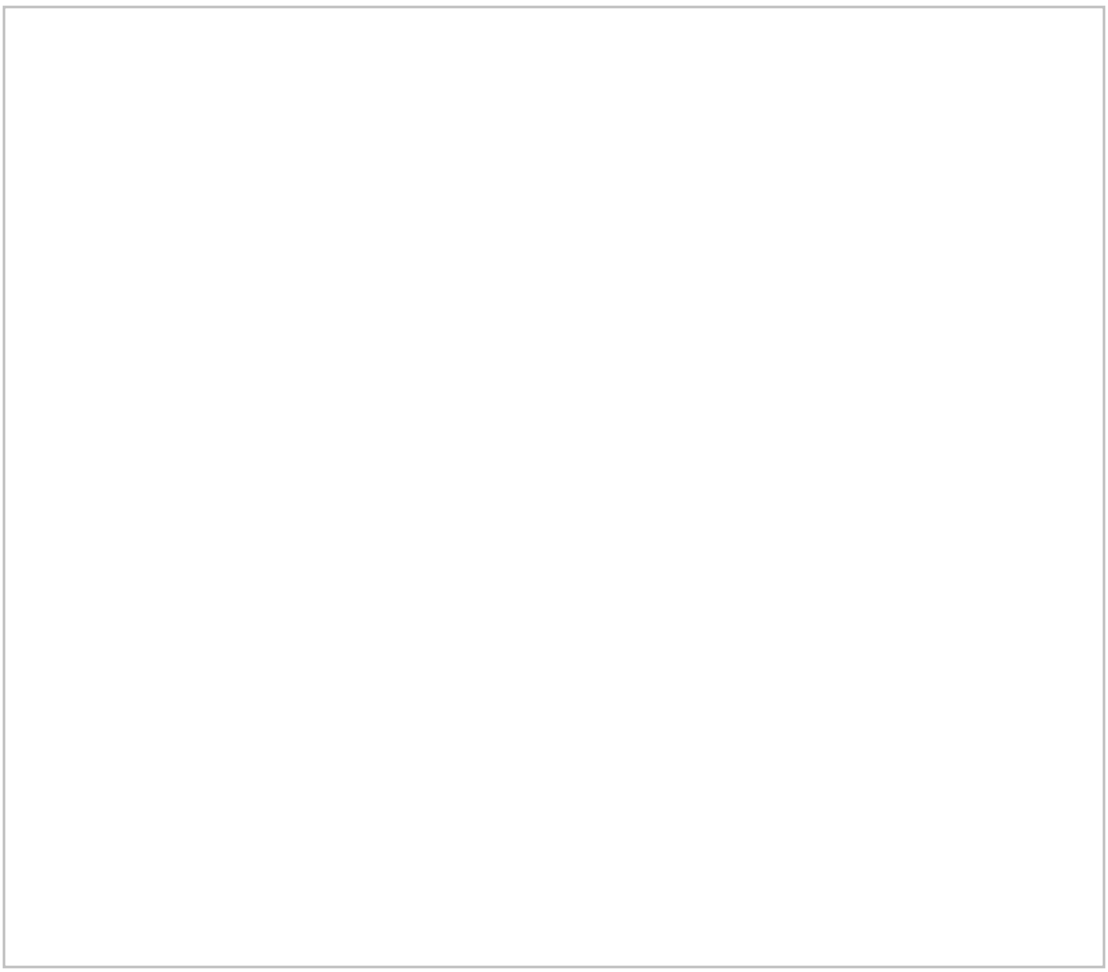
WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Joe Balash signed an order to reinstate the two Twin Metals hard rock mineral leases in Minnesota's Superior National Forest. These leases were signed in 1966 and renewed in 1989 and 2004. The ten year lease renewal gives Twin Metals renewed access to national forest land to search for minerals and prepare to develop a mining project.

"The actions taken under the Obama administration to unilaterally impair valid federal mineral leases and block responsible development in the Superior National Forest are finally in the past. This action is an appropriate course correction for the Department to realign policy with Congressional intent in mineral management and development. It's also another welcome signal from the Trump administration that the federal bureaucracy actually can promote responsible land stewardship while promoting jobs and economic growth." -- **Ranking Republican Rob Bishop (R-Utah)**

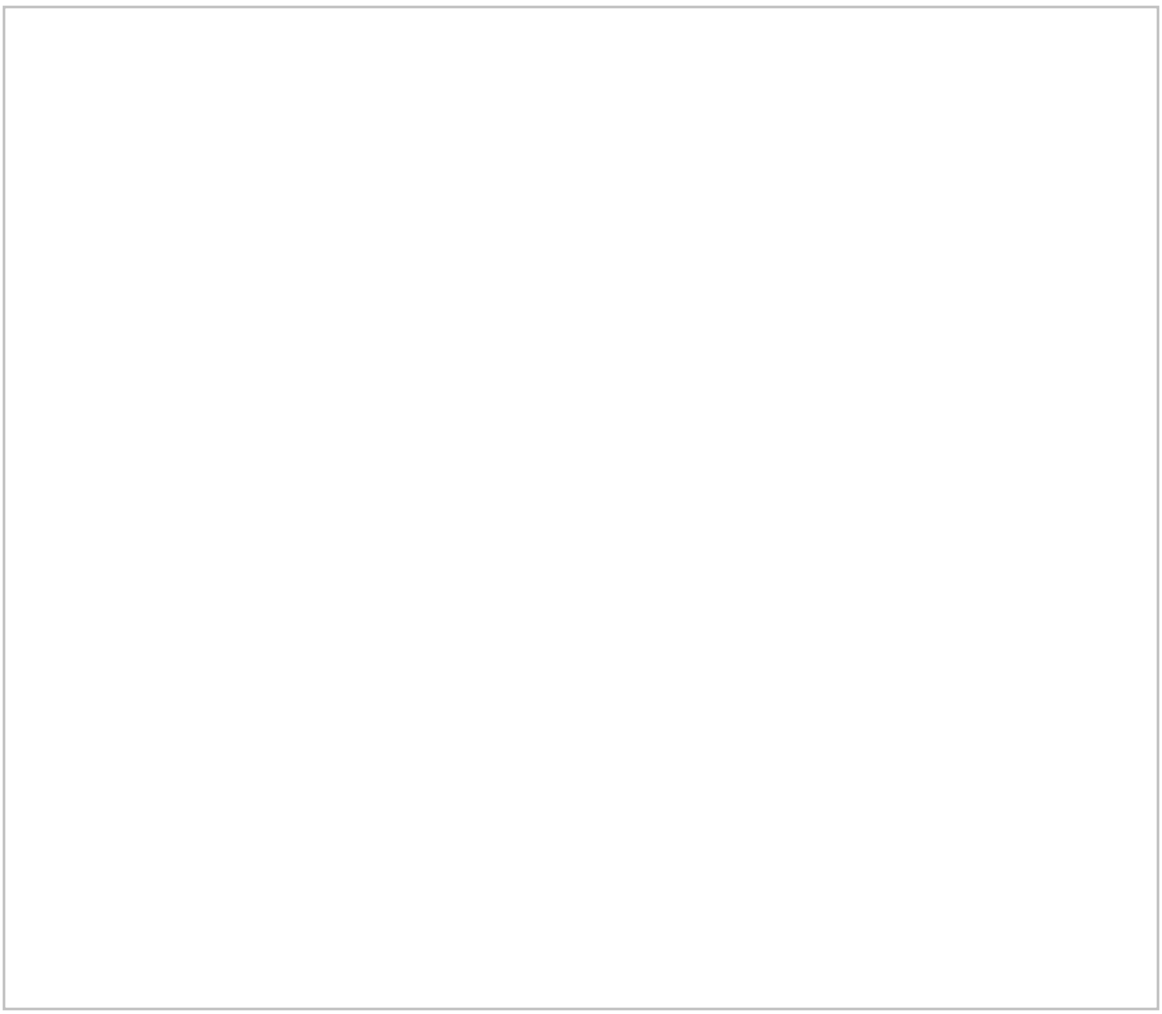
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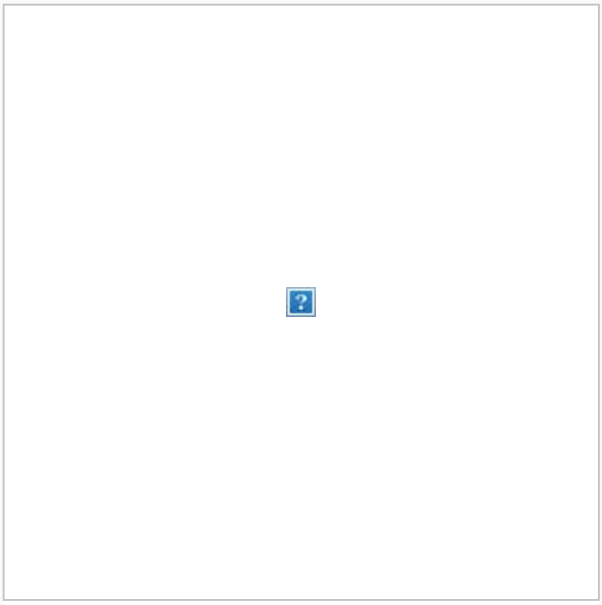
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From: Emilio Navarrete
To: Kathleen Benedetto
Subject: Western Caucus Efforts Reinstate Two MN Leases that Were Politically Cancelled by the Obama Administration
Date: Wednesday, May 15, 2019 4:44:43 PM

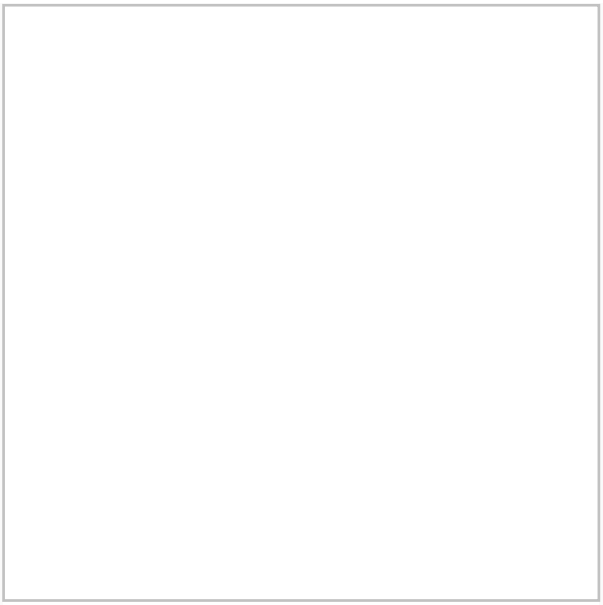
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For Immediate Release
Date: May 15, 2019
Contact: Emilio Navarrete | Emilio.Navarrete@mail.house.gov

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Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, Joe Balash, renewed two Twin Metals Minnesota LLC-held hardrock mineral leases located on the Superior National Forest in Northern Minnesota that were cancelled by the Obama Administration to appease extremists.

In the waning days of the Obama Administration, federal land management agencies took several actions that would decimate local economies, stifle job creation and cause significant harm to K-12 education in Northern Minnesota.

Specifically, the Obama Administration's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) inappropriately rejected Twin Metals Minnesota's application to renew two hardrock mineral leases in Minnesota's Superior National Forest – leases that were signed in 1966 and renewed without controversy in 1989 and 2004.

In conjunction with cancelling these leases, on January 19th, 2017, the day before President Trump was sworn in, the previous administration published a 234,328-acre federal mineral withdrawal application in the Federal Register, to restrict for a 20-year moratorium, lands within the Superior National Forest in Northern Minnesota.

This action immediately placed this vast area off limits to future mineral leasing, exploration and potential development for two years while a 20-year withdrawal was being considered. The total withdrawal

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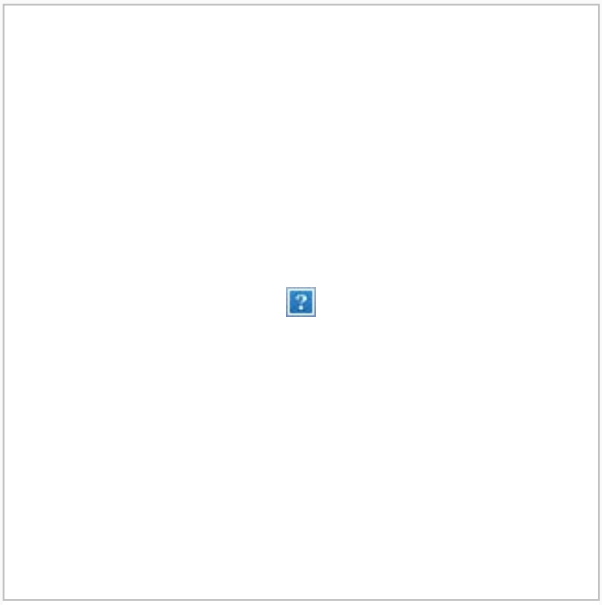
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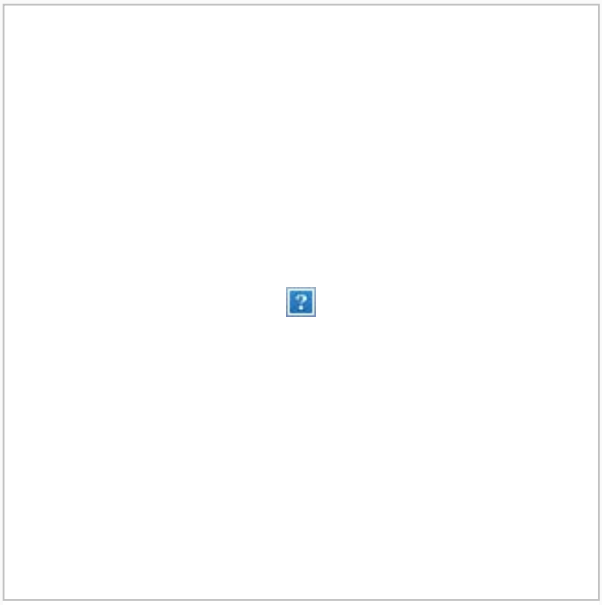
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From: Emilio Navarrete
To: Brian Steed
Subject: Western Caucus Efforts Reinstate Two MN Leases that Were Politically Cancelled by the Obama Administration
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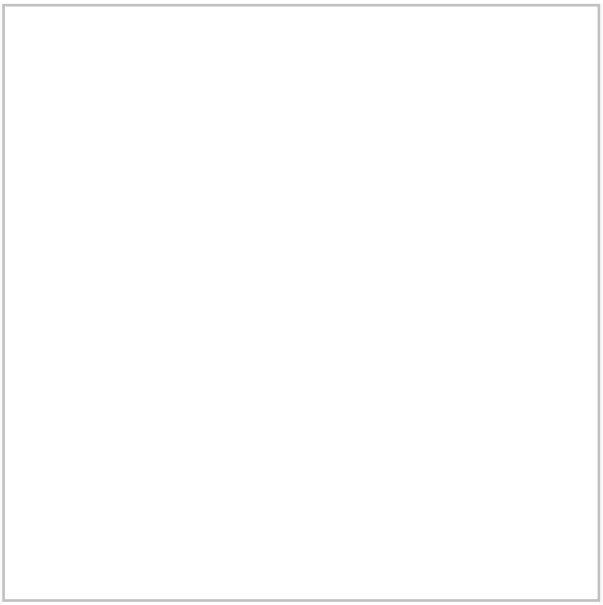
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For Immediate Release
Date: May 15, 2019
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Western Caucus Efforts Reinstate Two MN Leases that Were Politically Cancelled by the Obama Administration

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash and Members of the Western Caucus released statements following the reinstatement of two Twin Metals Minnesota LLC-held hardrock mineral leases located on the Superior National Forest in Northern Minnesota:

U.S. Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash: "Mining on public lands balances conservation strategies and policies with the need to produce minerals that add value to the lives of all Americans by providing raw materials used in the manufacture of medical aids, automobiles, smart phones and computers, and household appliances. Under President Trump's leadership and direction from the Secretary, this action may reduce the vulnerability to disruption of critical mineral supplies if it leads to the development and production of critical

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minerals in an environmentally responsible, regulatory-consistent, and economically feasible manner. Mining strategic metals in the United States is beneficial to national security, national and local economies, and job creation."

Rep. Pete Stauber (MN-08): "In northern Minnesota, mining is our past, our present, and our future. With 21st century technology, we can responsibly develop the resources needed for the modern world and unleash the economic engine of northeastern Minnesota. Unfortunately, misinformed policies of the past have not only prevented the responsible development of our resources but have even prohibited companies like Twin Metals from even submitting a proposed mining plan. I applaud Secretary Bernhardt and the Trump Administration for putting politics aside and rightfully giving our miners the opportunity to meet or exceed all environmental standards."

Chairman Paul Gosar (AZ-04): "Thanks to the Trump Administration, tens of thousands of hard-working Americans in Northern Minnesota, that were negatively impacted by the previous Administration's political anti-mining actions, are one step closer to employment and economic prosperity as a result of today's action by the Department of the Interior. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle like to talk about how local voices are being forgotten. Yet, under the previous administration, the voices of many

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Northern Minnesotans were not only forgotten, but were outright ignored and attacked. These include teachers, labor unions, miners and local citizens who depend on revenues generated by mining for their very survival. But the Western Caucus did not forget and neither did the Administration. Thanks to the work of President Trump, Secretary Bernhardt, Assistant Secretary Balash, Congressman Stauber and Congressman Emmer, Northern Minnesotans will have the opportunity to reclaim their livelihoods and get back to work."

House Natural Resources Republican Leader Rob Bishop (UT-01): "The actions taken under the Obama administration to unilaterally impair valid federal mineral leases and block responsible development in the Superior National Forest are finally in the past. This action is an appropriate course correction for the Department to realign policy with Congressional intent in mineral management and development. It's also another welcome signal from the Trump administration that the federal bureaucracy actually can promote responsible land stewardship while promoting jobs and economic growth."

Chief Infrastructure and Forestry Officer Bruce Westerman (AR-04): "On the last day of his administration, former President Obama enacted a politically-charged mineral withdrawal that met

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nationwide bipartisan criticism. This unilateral decision threatened stable, family-wage jobs in Northern Minnesota, locking up nearly 200,000 acres of public land. I applaud President Trump for not only reversing this political withdrawal, but also continuing to prioritize rural economies nationwide by today renewing the Twin Metals Mineral leases. This decision is the first step towards allowing a full environmental study of the project, and the first step towards the hundreds of jobs and economic development that this project will bring. This project will also provide a domestic supply of critical rare earth minerals necessary to support our booming tech industry, which currently relies on supplies from China and other foreign producers."

Rep. Tom Emmer (MN-06): "Following the Interior's announcement today, I am pleased that the Trump Administration acknowledges that we can responsibly develop our state's resources - bringing jobs back to this region - while preserving the forests, lakes and streams that all Minnesotans hold dear. Our state and local economies deserve to prosper, and we can ensure that, while also protecting Minnesota's beauty for future generations. When it comes to protecting the environment and developing our economic assets, nobody does it better than Minnesota."

Background:

Today, U.S. Department of the Interior's

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Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, Joe Balash, renewed two Twin Metals Minnesota LLC-held hardrock mineral leases located on the Superior National Forest in Northern Minnesota that were cancelled by the Obama Administration to appease extremists.

In the waning days of the Obama Administration, federal land management agencies took several actions that would decimate local economies, stifle job creation and cause significant harm to K-12 education in Northern Minnesota.

Specifically, the Obama Administration's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) inappropriately rejected Twin Metals Minnesota's application to renew two hardrock mineral leases in Minnesota's Superior National Forest – leases that were signed in 1966 and renewed without controversy in 1989 and 2004.

In conjunction with cancelling these leases, on January 19th, 2017, the day before President Trump was sworn in, the previous administration published a 234,328-acre federal mineral withdrawal application in the Federal Register, to restrict for a 20-year moratorium, lands within the Superior National Forest in Northern Minnesota.

This action immediately placed this vast area off limits to future mineral leasing, exploration and potential development for two years while a 20-year withdrawal was being considered. The total withdrawal

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application boundary spanned approximately 425,000 acres and included 95,000 acres of state school trust fund lands.

17,000 jobs, $3 billion for education, $1.5 billion in annual wages, $2.5 billion annually for our economy and a total of four billion tons of strategic-and-critical-mineral-containing ore were at risk if these political anti-mining actions by the Obama Administration were not over overturned.

The Western Caucus has played a key role in correcting these injustices. In June of 2017, Reps. Paul Gosar, Tom Emmer and Bruce Westerman toured several mining operations, held a roundtable and visited the proposed federal withdrawal area. The comments they heard on the ground from American families, businesses and individuals who want good-paying jobs and support mining projects in the area led to a Congressional effort to overturn the Obama Administration’s land grab.

On November 30, 2017, the House passed H.R. 3905, the "Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act" which was introduced by Rep. Tom Emmer (MN-06) and cosponsored by numerous members of the Western Caucus. It's primary purpose was to overturn the Obama Administration's withdrawal in the Superior National Forest and reinstate the two leases that were arbitrarily cancelled.

On September 6, 2018, the U.S.

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Department of Agriculture, announced that it has canceled the application for the Superior National Forest Withdrawal.

An awesome video produced by the people of Minnesota on these issues can be viewed HERE.

Previous Caucus releases can be found HERE, HERE, HERE and HERE.

Courtesy of the Department of the Interior

Consistent with Executive Order 13817, A Federal Strategy to Ensure Secure and Reliable Supplies of Critical Minerals, signed by President Trump on March 26, 2017 and Secretarial Order 3359, Critical Mineral Independence and Security, Interior has renewed these hard rock mineral leases for the purpose of developing “world-class” deposits of copper, nickel, and palladium minerals on the Superior National Forest. The Bureau is entrusted with managing these onshore federal mineral resources on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield, which includes facilitating their development while also requiring mitigation of environmental impacts. The BLM currently oversees 41 additional mineral applications in the Superior National Forest. These include existing prospecting permits, new prospecting permit applications, applications to extend prospecting permits, and three Preference Right Lease Applications. A list of these permits and applications can be found HERE.

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Courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. Diverse activities authorized on these lands generated $96 billion in sales of goods and services throughout the American economy in fiscal year 2017. These activities supported more than 468,000 jobs.

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