

**Chairman Dan Newhouse (WA-04)**

**Remarks: “Minnesota Mining and American Potential: An Opportunity for a Brighter and More Secure Future”**

**January 13, 2022**

Thank you, Ranking Member Westerman – I’m so glad to see such a strong turn out from both the Committee and the Caucus, and I’m delighted to welcome our witnesses to Washington, D.C.!

As Chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus, I’m proud to join Representatives Westerman and Stauber to highlight a topic that is extremely important to our national defense, our nation’s energy security, and our economy. And as you’ll hear today, it’s absolutely critical for Minnesota’s rural communities.

If we are serious about a clean energy future – and I think we can all agree that we are – we need domestic mining. And in the United States, we do it best.

In addition to creating good-paying American jobs, mineral development in the U.S. is done with the most rigorous labor and environmental protections in the world. We should be proud of that fact!

We absolutely must be digging our own future – literally – instead of relying on foreign nations, who utilize slave and child labor to develop the very minerals we have access to here on American soil.

The untapped minerals in the Duluth Complex have the potential to bolster domestic manufacturing of electric vehicles, clean energy technologies, and more. Yet proponents of safe, responsible mining are consistently met with opposition, red tape, and – as demonstrated by the Biden Administration – flat-out cancellation.

This isn’t just about Minnesota – although it is hugely important to Mr. Stauber and his constituents, and I am proud to support his efforts – but this is about the whole country.

The Twin Metals mine and the other mining opportunities in the Duluth Complex represent exactly the types of projects we should be approving, promoting, and investing in to ensure a strong, stable supply of domestic minerals, strengthen our economy, and continue working toward American energy dominance.

I sincerely hope that our message will reach those in the Biden Administration who desperately need to hear it, and I hope that Interior Secretary Haaland will accept Mr. Stauber's invitation to visit northern Minnesota and see this project firsthand – it sounds like she's already confirmed her interest, so I hope she'll follow through! I know I am particularly excited to join both of my colleagues in leading the Caucus in a field tour to Mr. Stauber's district in just a few short weeks to see these vast resources firsthand.

So I just want to thank both Mr. Westerman and Mr. Stauber for their leadership and their partnership on this issue.

I'm looking forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

### **Questions:**

#### **Ryan Jackson, Senior VP, Gov. & Political Affairs, National Mining Association**

Let's talk about permitting. A lot of our mineral availability exists on public lands. But even without the hurdles that come with dealing with federal lands, permitting a new mine could take anywhere from 7 to 10 plus years, on average! And that's just the mine, let alone any refining process for the minerals being extracted.

Mr. Jackson, Can you tell us more about the opportunities that could exist with permitting reform to bring more mines online to meet our mineral demand while also having a more robust, domestic refining industry and how the right incentives need to be in place to make those goals a reality?

#### **Mark Compton, Executive Director, American Exploration & Mining Association**

Mark, last year during the COP26 Summit, you and I penned an op-ed talking about how the U.S. should quote “dig our own future” and pursue more domestic mining opportunities. Unfortunately, this Administration seemed to miss our message with the mineral withdraw in northern Minnesota we’re discussing today.

Can you tell us more about technological developments that exist to make mining safer, less invasive, and more environmentally friendly?

Just yesterday I was talking with Congressmen Fulcher and Simpson and community members in Idaho about a new mine coming online in their region that in 30 years, you’d never even know there was a mine there – can you tell us more about those reclamation plans that projects have to have in place from the get-go?

**Heather Reams, President, Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions (CRES)**

Heather, the Biden Administration has talked about the need for a domestic source of minerals, especially the minerals we rely on countries like China and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for. Unfortunately, the Administration’s actions simply don’t line up with those words. In fact, the Administration has implemented mineral withdraws in Minnesota, Arizona, New Mexico, and other areas across the United States. Not only that, but we continue to lose the race for dominance in this sphere to our adversary, China.

And let me just say also, I’ve brought up to my friends on the other side of the aisle that I think we need to lead congressional delegation tours to the Congo, to Bolivia, to Peru and Ecuador and Madagascar and Burkina Faso and see firsthand the horrific child slave labor practices taking place there that are providing the minerals to us and the global economy. Maybe that will help open their eyes to the importance of domestic mining. But I digress, Heather... so back to China...

Can you talk about the implications we will face should China continue to keep their lead in the race for clean energy technology development?

**All Minnesota Guests**

I want to thank you all, particularly the Minnesotans in the room, for making this conversation a priority and coming to Washington D.C. to share your experiences

with lawmakers and regulators. Your representative, Mr. Stauber, has been a staunch advocate for resource jobs in the region and the communities affected by the Administration's decision to place this withdrawal. While we can – and should – all take a page out of Mr. Stauber's book, what more can we do as Members of Congress to bring your voices to the forefront and advocate for more domestic mineral development?