

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this House, this special place, should not be tarnished any longer by the inexcusable behavior of some of our Members. The standard needs to be high.

Mr. Speaker, I give a special thank-you to Speaker PAUL RYAN and his commitment that he has that we get this right. I thank Ranking Member BRADY for the way that we have been able to work together on this. Certainly, Representatives SPEIER and COMSTOCK have been invaluable in this process as we go forward.

We have heard from so many Members today on the importance of this. This is a resolution that is necessary and it is a product of a strong bipartisan incorporation. This is something that is just the beginning, as has been said today. We had a hearing on November 14, and we will have another hearing on the Congressional Accountability Act on December 7. But to have this resolution to make sure that our Members and staff are educated to know their rights and responsibilities is a critical first step.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 630, which would require each Member, officer and employee of the House to complete anti-discrimination and anti-harassment training. Enacting this legislation ought to be a first step toward affirming with one voice that there is absolutely no place for discrimination nor harassment of any kind in the Halls of Congress. But we must also do more than agree to mandatory training.

As elected officials, we ought to be held to a higher standard. Congress must review and improve the current administrative procedure for victims to come forward. All harassment and discrimination allegations must be taken seriously. After enacting this measure, Congress must streamline the process, protect victims that wish to be protected, and ensure all allegations of wrongdoing are investigated with professionalism, urgency and due process.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation and encourage the House to take whatever administrative steps are necessary to make it easier for victims to come forward. More importantly, I respectfully ask all of my colleagues to take a close look inward at themselves and their offices and to put an immediate end to the cultural climate that has allowed harassment and discrimination to tarnish the institution of Congress. We can do better and we must.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the House Committees on the Judiciary, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 630, which requires all employees of the House of Representatives—including Members, interns, detailees, and fellows—to complete an anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training program during each session of Congress.

Additionally, each individual would be required to complete the training within ninety days of the start of each session, and each new employee to complete the training within ninety days of their hire date.

This training must be completed every session of Congress.

The resolution directs the Committee on House Administration to issue regulations to ensure compliance and transparency and upon passage of the resolution, the Committee is required to promulgate these regulations within thirty days.

Mr. Speaker, the many allegations of sexual harassment that have come to light involving prominent individuals in the fields of government, entertainment, business, and other fields in recent months are appalling and intolerable.

There must be zero-tolerance for sexual harassment in our society, and this body can set an example for the nation by declaring itself to be sexual harassment free zone and policing itself to hold members, staff, and associated personnel to this standard.

It is important that all persons working in this body understand that everyone has a right to a workplace free of harassment and intimidation and that complaints will be taken seriously and fully investigated by the Ethics Committee or the House Administration Committee.

Mr. Speaker, this is the moment to embrace and affirm zero tolerance for sexual harassment and assault and we must soon reauthorize and strengthen the Violence Against Women Act to provide stronger tools to prevent and punish sexual harassment and sexual assault.

As the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, I am committed to doing all I can to make this happen as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H. Res. 630 and urge all Members to vote in favor its adoption.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Res. 630.

This legislation would require all Members, offices, and employees of the House of Representatives to complete a workplace rights and responsibilities training program each session of Congress.

H. Res. 630 is a focused effort to address harassment and discrimination on Capitol Hill. As recent headlines have exposed, these issues are pervasive across the country. As leaders of the United States and voices for our constituents, we must do better. If we want to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace, we must lead by example and be willing to take every available step to ensure these instances are prevented and promptly addressed.

As a senior member of the House Judiciary Committee, I have long been committed to creating a positive and safe work environment. In early October of this year, my staff participated in a program on sexual harassment and workplace rights. Empowering employees with knowledge of their rights and drawing clear distinctions between appropriate behavior and harassment can help thwart abuses before they can occur. Additionally, educating employees on ways to report abuse can ensure that when incidents happen they are addressed forthrightly.

H. Res. 630 also requires interns and fellows to undergo training as well which is vital to full compliance. Most offices have well-established intern programs, and these individuals are often young, unpaid, and particularly vulnerable. It is important to ensure they too

know their rights and what is appropriate in an office setting.

I support H. Res. 630 because it is a bipartisan effort to promote equality and fair treatment in the workplace and it is a good first step in addressing such an extensive problem.

Some may rightfully ask what took us so long.

Passing this legislation sends the message that we condemn harassment in any form, and that we will use our authority to support positive work environments.

I urge each of you to support H. Res. 630. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 630.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MINNESOTA'S ECONOMIC RIGHTS IN THE SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST ACT

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 631, I call up the bill (H.R. 3905) to require congressional approval of any mineral withdrawal or monument designation involving the National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota, to provide for the renewal of certain mineral leases in such lands, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 631, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-41 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3905

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act".

SEC. 2. CONDITION ON MINERAL WITHDRAWAL OF NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN MINNESOTA.

Minerals within the National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota shall not be subject to withdrawal from disposition under United States mineral and geothermal leasing law unless the withdrawal is specifically approved by an Act of Congress enacted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. CONDITION ON MONUMENT DESIGNATION ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN MINNESOTA.

Section 320301 of title 54, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) LIMITATION ON EXTENSION OR ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL MONUMENT IN MINNESOTA.—No extension or establishment of national monuments on National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota may be undertaken except by express authorization of Congress.”.

SEC. 4. CLARIFYING THE NATURE OF MINERAL RIGHTS ON FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN MINNESOTA.

(a) MINERAL LEASES ISSUED WITHIN FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN MINNESOTA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—All mineral leases issued within the exterior boundaries of National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota under the authority of the Act of June 30, 1950 (16 U.S.C. 508b), or section 402 of Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1946 (5 U.S.C. App.), are indeterminate preference right leases that—

(A) shall be issued for an initial 20-year period; and

(B) as provided in paragraph (2), shall be renewable after the period described in subparagraph (A) for 10-year renewal periods.

(2) REQUIREMENTS FOR RENEWAL.—A lease shall be renewed under paragraph (1)(B)—

(A) if the lessee has complied with the terms and conditions of the lease during the preceding lease period; and

(B) on the condition that, at the end of each ten-year renewal period, such reasonable readjustment of the terms and conditions of the lease may be prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, for the purpose of—

(i) encouraging production; or

(ii) addressing changing conditions within the lease area.

(b) SUSPENSION OF OPERATIONS.—The Secretary of the Interior may suspend operations under a lease described in subsection (a) when—

(1) the lease can only be operated at a loss due to market conditions; or

(2) operations are interrupted by strikes.

(c) PERMITS FOR USE OF SURFACE LANDS.—With respect to lands subject to a lease pursuant to subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, may issue permits for the use of surface lands not included in the lease for purposes connected with, and reasonably necessary to, the exploration, development, and use of the deposits covered by the lease.

(d) APPLICABILITY TO MINERAL LEASES.—This section shall apply with respect to all mineral leases described in subsection (a), including—

(1) leases that on the date of the enactment of this section are not in effect; and

(2) the hard rock mineral leases for the Superior National Forest in Minnesota identified as MNES-01352 and MNES-01353.

(e) APPLICABILITY OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969.—The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4331 et seq.) shall apply with respect to a mineral lease described in subsection (a). In the case of the renewal of the existing hard rock mineral leases referred to in subsection (d)(2), the Bureau of Land Management shall complete the pending environmental assessment no later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(f) EXCLUSION OF BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS.—Nothing in this section may be construed as permitting the prospecting for development and utilization of mineral resources within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness or Mine Protection Area.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources.

After 1 hour of debate, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in House Report 115-429, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3905.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman GOSAR for his leadership on this and other issues in the Congressional Western Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, mining in the Superior National Forest, where these leases are located, has previously been authorized by Congress on several occasions. First in 1950, and again in 1978.

With that bill—the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act—Congress established a compromise in which mining was prohibited within the 1.1 million acre Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, but specifically authorized in the Superior National Forest.

Likewise, U.S. Forest Service plans for these areas have identified mining in these Superior Forest locations as a “desired condition.”

Despite this longstanding precedent, in December of 2016, the Obama administration abruptly canceled mining leases that have been held and renewed for decades in northern Minnesota. Then in January, the day before leaving office, President Obama signed off on a mineral withdrawal for an area spanning 425,000 acres, including 95,000 acres of State school trust fund lands.

There is a torrent of misinformation surrounding this bill, with alarmist groups begging that we “save the Boundary Waters.”

Mr. Speaker, the Boundary Waters were saved in 1978. The low-impact mining arrangements that these mining leases entail do not endanger the Boundary Waters, which is itself protected by a significant buffer as well.

The bill reiterates—redundantly, I will add, but in order to make it crystal clear—that mining is prohibited in the Boundary Waters and the surrounding buffer. To say otherwise is a blatant falsehood.

A few other facts that you won't hear from alarmists but that deserve to be said: this bill retains the full protections enshrined across the array of environmental laws and regulations which apply to mine leasing, permitting, and operation. The most notable in this case are the National Environmental Policy Act—NEPA—and the

Clean Water Act, which still apply, in full.

But the fact is that this bill is not about removing environmental protections, as some may have said.

Rather, what about when you don't actually remove any?

Rather, what initiated this situation is an arbitrary overreach by the Obama administration at the last minute. It was looking to score political points on its way out the door by taking the near-unprecedented action of initiating a full mineral withdrawal. That was undemocratic, and the huge support that this bill and mining in general enjoys in Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District, where the Superior Forest is located, is proof positive. But Article IV of the Constitution vests Congress with authority over public lands, and it is now up to us to act.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this chance to clear the air on some of the misconceptions and falsehoods that have been tarnishing this bill. It really is unfortunate that commonsense, local issues like this one are being dragged into a national partisan brawl. Nevertheless, I hope my colleagues are able to see through the deception, recognize the clear benefits of mining in Minnesota, and vote “yes” on this important bill.

Finally, I would like to share some comments from the Associated General Contractors of Minnesota, who noted that “H.R. 3905 changes no environmental review processes, relaxes no environmental standards, and specifically restates Congress' prohibition on any mining activity in the BWCAW and the surrounding protective buffer.”

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD their full letter.

ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS

OF MINNESOTA,

November 22, 2017.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WALZ: On behalf of the Associated General Contractors of Minnesota and our over 400 member firms, I am writing to urge your support for H.R. 3905, the “Minnesota's Economic Rights (MINER) in the Superior National Forest Act,” bipartisan legislation sponsored by Cong. Tom Emmer (MN-6th) and cosponsored by Cong. Collin Peterson (MN-7th), Cong. Jason Lewis (MN-2nd) and Cong. Paul Gosar (AZ-4th). H.R. 3905 is currently on the agenda of the House Rules Committee, on a path for House floor action in the coming weeks.

In 1950, Congress took action to make land available for mineral exploration and development within the Superior National Forest (SNF) within the Iron Range region in Northeast Minnesota. In 1978, Congress prohibited mining within the region's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and an adjacent protective buffer zone, while reaffirming that mining should be allowed and promoted in the remaining area of the SNF.

H.R. 3905 aims to correct the injustices being thrust upon the Iron Range by requiring congressional approval of any mineral withdrawal or monument designation involving the National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota, as well as providing for the renewal of certain mineral leases and ensuring future leases in the area remain valid and renewed as outlined by current law. Moreover, H.R. 3905 changes no environmental review processes, relaxes no environmental standards, and specifically restates

Congress' prohibition on any mining activity in the BWCAW and surrounding protective buffer.

H.R. 3905 would reaffirm long-standing Congressional intent in the management and development of critical minerals in Minnesota, eliminate bureaucratic delays in developing environmentally-responsible mine projects proposals, and restore the promise of future job growth and economic opportunity to an economically distressed region of the state.

We strongly urge your vote in support of H.R. 3905. Thank you for your support of mining in Minnesota and the thousands of good paying jobs that are sustained through safe and effective management of these natural resources.

Sincerely,

TIM WORKE,
CEO.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is quite simply a giveaway of mining rights on roughly 5,000 acres of public lands right next to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota to a Chilean mining conglomerate so that it can develop a copper mine that will, in all likelihood, leach toxic acid waste into the Boundary Waters for decades, if not centuries, to come. In order to do this, this bill overrides multiple laws that are in place to allow priceless natural places to be protected and it vetoes the scientific conclusions of the U.S. Forest Service.

Last year, the Forest Service recommended that two undeveloped 50-year-old mining leases in Minnesota's Superior National Forest be allowed to expire, stating that the development of a copper mine on these leases could lead to potentially extreme contamination of the Boundary Waters wilderness from acid mine drainage and leached materials.

The Boundary Waters isn't just a pristine and unique wilderness, it is also an economic engine for northern Minnesota. Over 1,000 pristine lakes, 1,200 miles of streams, and 2,000 campsites attract more than 150,000 visitors each year to canoe, kayak, fish, bird watch, ski, and simply explore and enjoy the natural beauty and peacefulness that is unlike anywhere else in the United States. These visitors bring in tens of millions of dollars annually, supporting thousands of local jobs.

□ 1530

The ecological and economic value of the Boundary Waters led the Forest Service to conclude: "... development of a regionally untested copper-nickel sulfide-ore mine within the same watershed as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness might cause serious and irreplaceable harm to this unique, iconic, and irreplaceable wilderness area."

As a result, the leases were not renewed, and the Forest Service began a study to look at whether to protect the area adjacent to the Boundary Waters

from mining for the next 20 years. This 2-year study is open. It is a public process designed to gather scientific information and local views on the potential impacts of copper mining, which is immediately adjacent to the Boundary Waters, and it is supported by an overwhelming majority—79 percent—of the voters in Minnesota.

Even this administration here in Washington has said that it intends to allow the study to run its course before making any decisions, but this legislation would make that study meaningless. It would reinstate the leases and make it almost impossible for them to expire. It would block the Forest Service from acting on its study no matter what it found and how the people in the region feel, and it would make it impossible for the President of the United States to protect this area using the Antiquities Act, all so a Chilean mining company can move forward with a dangerous mine next to one of our most pristine and special natural places.

Mr. Chairman, our public lands belong to all Americans, not simply to wealthy mining companies with the connections and the cash to try to overturn decisions they don't like through legislation. The company that we are talking about is challenging this decision to not renew their leases in court. That is the appropriate venue for that debate, not here in the Halls of Congress. We shouldn't rewrite the law to make sure that they get their way.

Even if the company wins the case, we should not be tying the Federal Government's hands to make sure that this mine gets developed, no matter what, instead of listening to the science. That is the wrong thing to do for any project like this, let alone one that sits right next to a unique and delicate wilderness like the Boundary Waters.

This bill is a blatant attempt to reward an individual foreign company at the expense of the American people and the American landscape, and I urge my colleagues to reject this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER), the originator of this bill.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, today's debate on H.R. 3905, Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act, also known as the MINER Act, is not just important to the great State of Minnesota. This legislation is critically important to the United States.

The MINER Act will reverse the misguided, last-minute actions of the Obama administration to stop any exploration of one of the most valuable precious metal deposits in the world.

The MINER Act will ensure that the people of Minnesota have the opportunity for jobs and economic pros-

perity that would come if the deposit can ever be mined in an environmentally safe and responsible manner.

The MINER Act will renew the Federal Government's commitment and promise to the citizens of Minnesota. When the Superior National Forest was created in 1909 and, later, when the Boundary Waters Canoe Area was established in 1978, there was an express agreement between the Federal Government and the State of Minnesota that mining and logging could continue in the Superior National Forest. In fact, according to the most recent Superior National Forest land use management plan, mining and logging are considered a desired condition in the forest.

This is about more than just the 10,000-plus jobs which are now at risk because of the lameduck actions of the Obama administration. This is about billions of dollars in revenue for Minnesota's economy and billions more in potential education funding for Minnesota's schools that are now on the line. This is about strategically important metals and minerals which are used by Americans every day. This is about undoing a last-ditch effort to further a political agenda at the expense of the livelihoods that Minnesotans have relied on for generations.

The MINER Act, again, is about protecting Minnesota's right to explore and, if environmentally appropriate, mine valuable and important precious metals, precious metals that are not only necessary to our everyday technology, but which are critically important to our Nation's national defense.

There are some who would like to deny Minnesota the right to explore and potentially mine these precious metals. They argue that any mining activity could negatively impact our beloved Boundary Waters Canoe Area. This concern, however, ignores the fact that, if a mine is ever proposed, and to date there has been no mine proposed, if one is ever proposed in the Superior National Forest, it would have to satisfy all current local, State, and Federal environmental review and permitting requirements before it could ever be approved to proceed.

We can and we will protect the Boundary Waters. I have no doubt that we can find a way to preserve Minnesota's pristine landscape without permanently destroying any future job creation or economic development in Minnesota. By passing the MINER Act, we protect thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in revenue and education funding while leaving an extensive process intact to protect and preserve the environment and our State.

In conclusion, I encourage all my colleagues to support the MINER Act because we know someday someone might find a way to mine these important precious metals in a safe and environmentally responsible way, and if that happens, Minnesota deserves the opportunity and the jobs and economic prosperity that will ensue.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 8 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this destructive bill.

This bill undermines bedrock environmental and public land management laws in order to create a perpetual lease for a foreign-owned toxic mine. This mine will be on the doorstep of one of our country's last truly wild places, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

The Boundary Waters contains 1.1 million acres of unspoiled woodlands and more than 1,000 pristine lakes. The water wilderness is beloved by adventurers, canoers, sportsmen, and sports-women from all across the United States and around the world.

To safeguard this natural treasure, Congress has prohibited logging, mining, and even the use of most motorized vehicles on this Federal land. It has made the Boundary Waters a haven for birds and other wildlife and the most visited wilderness area in the United States of America.

These visitors, over 250,000 annually, have helped the economy and created jobs in northern Minnesota, but the bill we are debating today puts this all at risk. It paves the way for a massive sulfide-ore copper mine just a few miles from the Boundary Waters Wilderness.

Sulfide-ore mining is the most toxic industry in the United States. Sulfide mines pollute waterways with acid drainage, which contain arsenic, lead, and mercury. This type of mining is particularly risky in the vast, interconnected watershed that flows throughout the Boundary Waters into Voyageurs National Park and across the border into the Canadian provincial park.

The supporters of H.R. 3905 claim that the bill still protects the Boundary Waters because the mines will be located outside the wilderness area. Mr. Speaker, this is simply not the case. Let me show you where the mining would take place here.

This is the site of the proposed mine on the edge of the wilderness area. The river that you see flows through the Boundary Waters. The area contains popular Forest Service campgrounds and entry points to the wilderness. It is a base for scouting and veterans' outdoor recreation trips. Some of the Superior National Forest's most popular fishing lakes and hunting grounds are in this area. They are home to hundreds of people and businesses.

If this bill passes, it will create an industrial wasteland. This bill poses an unacceptable risk of irreparable damage to a pristine wilderness.

A 2012 study of American sulfide-ore mines found that all mines have leaked, and 92 percent of them had experienced failures that negatively affected the local water quality. Even state-of-the-art sulfide-ore copper mines consistently pollute their surrounding environments.

For example, in August 2014, a copper mine in British Columbia released a toxic slurry—10 billion liters of wastewater and 5 billion liters of tailings—that created a polluted dystopia of dead trees and contaminated salmon spawning areas.

Because of the risks involved with these mines, the Forest Service has begun a 2-year environmental review that will determine if the Boundary Waters is an appropriate place for dangerous sulfide-ore copper mining or if a 20-year withdrawal of mining rights in the watershed is appropriate.

This review is the process that Congress established, under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, for considering mineral withdrawal. The review is supported by Minnesota's Governor, tribal governments, and 79 percent of all Minnesotans. It also has been supported by both the current and the former administration.

Just this morning, again, I spoke with the chief of the U.S. Forest Service and thanked him for the administration's commitment to allow the study to go forward.

But the bill we are considering today stops this established scientific review process from going forward. Instead, it creates a loophole for the benefit of a foreign mining interest. It automatically reinstates two expired and denied leasings dating back to 1966, before modern environmental laws like the Clean Water Act. It allows permanent mining leases on national forestland, our Nation's public land, removing scientific safeguards, environmental considerations, and public input from the renewal process. It exempts Federal forests in Minnesota from the protections of the landmark Antiquities Act. It sets a dangerous precedent and will have consequences all across our country.

There is simply no justification for Congress to rewrite the rules for our Federal forests in Minnesota, and that is exactly what this piece of legislation does. In short, this proposal is a giveaway of public resources to private interests. One of our Nation's last wild places becomes collateral damage.

Good people of both parties all across Minnesota and throughout this country know the importance of protecting this pristine wilderness, and that is why so many of them have submitted letters to Congress in opposition to H.R. 3905.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD these letters of opposition from Minnesota's Governor, Mark Dayton; three Tribal nations: Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, and White Earth Bands of the Minnesota Chippewa; the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, the National Wildlife Federation, and other sporting groups; the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin; Veterans for the Boundary Waters; and a coalition of dozens of national organizations that advocate for clean water and public lands and conservation.

STATE OF MINNESOTA,
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR MARK DAYTON,
Saint Paul, MN, November 27, 2017.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: I write in strong opposition to H.R. 3905, which I understand has passed out of Committee and is being reviewed by House Majority Leadership for a floor vote. I implore you not to schedule a vote on this bill without a full vetting of the serious risks to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from adjacent copper-nickel mining, the status of the two-year federal study currently underway, and the wishes of the majority of Minnesotans, who oppose copper-nickel mining in the immediate vicinity of the Boundary Waters.

H.R. 3905 is a bill, "To require congressional approval of any mineral withdrawal or monument designation involving the National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota, to provide for the renewal of certain mineral leases in such lands, and for other purposes." H.R. 3905 was introduced in response to the desires of a foreign mining company to use Congress to circumvent the deliberations of the U.S. Departments of Interior and Agriculture and their agencies, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), to determine whether copper-nickel mining can be conducted safely in this ecologically sensitive part of Minnesota.

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BCAW) is America's most popular national Wilderness Area, drawing visitors from all over the world to Northeastern Minnesota to fish, hunt, and experience its interconnected pristine lakes, rivers and streams. Additionally, the BCAW contributes enormously to Minnesota's social and economic wellbeing.

In January, 2017, the BLM and the USFS began a comprehensive two-year study to determine whether copper-nickel mining, with its toxic by-product, sulfide ore, is appropriate within the watershed and immediate vicinity of the BWCA. Specifically, this environmental review will determine whether the Superior National Forest lands next to the BCAW should be removed from the federal mining program to protect the Wilderness from pollution and other environmental degradation caused by the resulting sulfide ore. The study considers a wide variety of factors, including scientific evidence, public input, economic considerations, ecological characteristics, and recreational value, among others.

I respectfully ask that you allow the completion of this important review process. Over 126,000 Americans have submitted public comments as part of it. Many attended three public meetings conducted earlier this year by the BLM and USFS. Moving H.R. 3905 forward at this time would disregard the input of all Americans, who have participated in the process, as well as the views of the 79 percent of Minnesotans, who favor the two-year pause and environmental review of potential impacts to the BCAW.

The BCAW is crucially important to our state, and I believe strongly that future federal and state decisions about its future should be made only after the most careful and objective scientific review. I urge you to reject the attempts by a foreign mining corporation to short-circuit the review process underway, and to affirm the importance of a careful, objective analysis under the existing federal legal framework.

Continuing this review process is the best way to allow for well-informed federal and state decisions, which will affect many future generations of Americans. Industry should not dictate the stewardship of taxpayer-owned public lands, nor use Congress

to short-circuit sound decision-making—especially regarding pristine Wilderness Areas like the BWCAW.

Sincerely,

MARK DAYTON,
Governor.

FOND DU LAC BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA RESERVATION
BUSINESS COMMITTEE,

Cloquet, MN, August 3, 2017.

Re Subcommittee's July 27, 2017 Hearing on Congressman Emmer's Draft Bill

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

Hon. RAÚL GRIJALVA,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

Hon. PAUL GOSAR,
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, Washington, DC.

Hon. ALAN LOWENTHAL,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMEN BISHOP AND GOSAR AND RANKING MEMBERS GRIJALVA AND LOWENTHAL: I write on behalf of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to express our profound concerns about, and strong objections to, the draft bill offered by Congressman Emmer that was the subject of the hearing on July 27 before the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. This draft bill would retroactively grant to a foreign-owned mining company—one that has a history of environmental violations in its home country—a perpetual lease of federal mineral rights. It would further eliminate an ongoing administrative process that is essential to the proper evaluation of any future development of federal minerals within this exceptional part of the Superior National Forest lands. We urge you not to support this measure.

The Fond du Lac Band is a federally recognized Indian tribe. We hold a Reservation just south of Superior National Forest which was established for us by Treaty with the United States on September 30, 1854, 10 Stat. 1109. The 1854 Treaty further reserved to us the rights to hunt, fish and gather on lands outside our Reservation. These lands extend into the Arrowhead region of Minnesota, and encompass the lands within much of Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), including the lands that are affected by this draft bill.

The BWCAW, the lands adjacent to it, as well as the lands beyond the BWCAW's buffer zone and within the Superior National Forest, are pristine. This region—within the Rainy Lake Watershed—is a unique water-based ecosystem with thousands of lakes and interconnected waterbodies. The quality of its waters is high and those waters provide critically important habitat for fish and wildlife, including moose and other unique natural resources like wild rice. The waters, wild rice, fish and game are especially important to the Chippewa. Such natural resources have sustained our people for centuries and are the foundation of our culture and religion. The natural resources in this region play an increasingly important role in our ability to feed our families and exercise our Treaty rights, because many of the waters southwest of this region are impaired (as designated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) from mining pollutants which have, in turn, destroyed wild rice beds and led to fish consumption advisories.

Although northeastern Minnesota has a long history of mining, the mining done to

date in the State has been for iron and taconite. The proposals to develop sulfide ore mining, for copper, nickel and palladium, would be the first of their kind in Minnesota. The history of such mines elsewhere highlights the very serious environmental damage that they pose from acid mine drainage—risks that Minnesota has not yet had occasion to address or regulate. Those risks are especially acute in water-based ecosystems like those in the BWCAW and the Rainy Lake watershed of Minnesota. And the proposed development of sulfide ore mines in lands immediately south of the BWCAW poses a serious and direct threat to the BWCAW for the very simple reason that the waters in that region flow north—towards the BWCAW.

Because of the very substantial risks posed by sulfide-ore mining, Minnesota Governor Dayton made a decision in March 2016 not to permit the use of state lands for mining in this area, and subsequently the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture made like decisions with regard to federal lands. In particular, these federal agencies declined to renew two leases of federal minerals which had been made a half-century ago to the predecessor of Twin Metals Mine, and its foreign owner, Antofagasta Minerals. One of these leases covers land that is directly adjacent to the BWCAW. The other is within three miles of the BWCAW. The federal decision was based on a determination that the leases posed an unacceptable risk to the waters and natural resources in the BWCAW. In connection with that decision, the Departments of Interior and Agriculture initiated a process to evaluate whether 234,328 acres of federal lands within this ecologically unique region should be withdrawn from mining.

The federal review process is now underway and should be allowed to continue. Decisions on whether to allow sulfide-ore mining, especially in this unique water-based ecosystem, need to take into account all of the impacts of the proposed project and should be based on objective science, economics and the social and related impacts of such development on the lives and livelihood of Minnesotans, including federally-protected tribal Treaty rights.

Such analysis should also be done before any decision is made to reinstate expired, or expiring, leases of federal minerals in this area. The need for such an analysis is illustrated by the expired leases for the Twin Metals Mine. The original leases, which had a 20-year term, were made in 1966, well before enactment of laws that are essential to protecting the environment, such as the Clean Water Act. The original leases were also made before the federal courts confirmed the continued rights of the Chippewa to hunt, fish and gather in this region, and accordingly do not take into account the impact of the mineral leases on these treaty-protected rights. All such matters should be carefully considered, and the on-going administrative review process is intended to do this and should be allowed to continue.

The draft bill does not do this. Instead of allowing a process that would permit informed decision-making, the bill would eliminate the on-going review process. The bill would further retroactively reinstate the Twin Metals' expired leases, while rewriting the terms of those leases to convert them into "indeterminate" leases, while further limiting the federal government's ability to impose conditions on these leases—giving to the company what appears to be essentially a perpetual right to the federal minerals on these lands. Further, the bill would do the same for all other unidentified leases that may now exist on National Forest Service lands within Minnesota, as well as any future such leases.

The kind of mining that Twin Metals and Antofagasta propose to develop is dangerous and poses a direct and substantial threat to what has long been recognized as an exceptional and extraordinary wilderness. Those threats should be carefully assessed through the on-going administrative review process. Congress should not enact laws that preclude informed decision-making or which blindly re-write leases, but should allow the federal agencies which have been delegated responsibility for addressing the terms and conditions on which federal lands may be leased, to continue to exercise that authority under existing law. Finally, to the extent that Twin Metals Mine contends that the federal government's decision not to renew its leases is wrong, it has already chosen to raise those claims in federal court, where they are pending.

We urge Congress not to proceed with this draft bill.

Sincerely,

KEVIN R. DUPUIS, Sr.,
Chairman.

GRAND PORTAGE RESERVATION
TRIBAL COUNCIL,
Grand Portage, MN, April 29, 2016.

Hon. TOM VILSACK,
Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC.

Hon. CHRISTINA GOLDFUSS,
Director, Council on Environmental Quality, Washington, DC.

Hon. SALLY JEWELL,
Secretary of the Interior, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY VILSACK, SECRETARY JEWELL, AND DIRECTOR GOLDFUSS: The Grand Portage Band ("the Band") is a federally recognized Indian tribe, as one of the member bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe ("MCT"). The Band, along with two other MCT Bands, Fond du Lac and Bois Forte, retain hunting, fishing, and other usufructuary rights that extend throughout the entire northeast portion of the state of Minnesota under the 1854 Treaty of LaPointe (the "Ceded Territory"). In the Ceded Territory, all the Bands have a legal interest in protecting natural resources and all federal agencies share in the federal government's trust responsibility to the Bands to maintain those treaty resources.

The Band is concerned with the prospect of a series of sulfide-ore mines being developed in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area ("BWCA") watershed. The BWCA watershed is located on the Minnesota/Ontario border and is entirely within the 1854 Ceded Territory. The BWCA watershed is comprised of a vast area of pristine interconnected waterways that have been used by the Chippewa for centuries. Low buffering capacity of water and soil and the interconnection of lakes and streams, make the BWCA watershed particularly vulnerable to the impacts of mining.

Sulfide-ore mines are proposed to be built in the BWCA watershed, immediately adjacent to the BWCA and upstream from it. These mines would threaten to pollute pristine water and damage the important forest habitat used by many types of wildlife. Sulfide-ore mining has a consistent record of devastating environmental harm, including contaminating waters, degrading forests, and predicted, catastrophic spills of toxic materials. There are inherent risks to sulfide-ore mining, and it makes no sense to place what the Environmental Protection Agency calls the nation's most toxic industry in the BWCA watershed and within the Ceded Territory upon which the Band relies.

Therefore, the Band is requesting that the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture take steps to permanently protect the Boundary Waters watershed front

sulfide-ore mining. Specifically, we urge you to:

1. Ensure that no leasing of federal minerals occurs within the BWCA watershed by denying applications for new federal mineral leases and federal mineral lease renewals.

2. Withdraw the federally owned minerals within the BWCA watershed from the federal mineral leasing program.

3. Take any additional measures necessary to protect the BWCA watershed from the threat of sulfide-ore mining.

We urge you to ensure that the full extent of the risks posed by large-scale sulfide-ore mining in the BWCA headwaters are thoroughly considered in order to determine the best course for the future of the watershed and the tribal communities who rely on its clean water and intact forested habitats to exercise usufructuary rights.

Sincerely,

NORMAN W. DESCHAMPE,
Chairman.

WHITE EARTH RESERVATION
TRIBAL COUNCIL,
White Earth, MN, May 23, 2016.

Hon. TOM VILSACK,
*Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of
Agriculture, Washington, DC.*

Hon. CHRISTINA GOLDFUSS,
*Director, Council on Environmental Quality,
Washington, DC.*

Hon. SALLY JEWELL,
*Secretary of the Interior, U.S. Department of
the Interior, Washington, DC.*

DEAR SECRETARY VILSACK, SECRETARY JEWELL, AND DIRECTOR GOLDFUSS: The Grand Portage Band ("the Band") is a federally recognized Indian tribe, as one of the member bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe ("MCT"). The Band, along with two other MCT Bands, Fond duLac and Bois Forte, retain hunting, fishing, and other usufructuary rights that extend throughout the entire northeast portion of the state of Minnesota under the 1854 Treaty of LaPointe. In the Ceded Territory, all the Bands have a legal interest in protecting natural resources and all federal agencies share in the federal government's trust responsibility to the Bands to maintain those treaty resources.

The Band is concerned with the prospect of a series of sulfide-ore mines being developed in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area ("BWCA") watershed. The BWCA watershed is located on the Minnesota/Ontario border and is entirely within the 1854 Ceded Territory. The BWCA watershed is comprised of a vast area of pristine interconnected waterways that have been used by the Chippewa for centuries. Low buffering capacity of water and soil and the interconnection of lakes and streams, make the BWCA watershed particularly vulnerable to the impacts of mining.

Sulfide-ore mines are proposed to be built in the BWCA watershed, immediately adjacent to the BWCA and upstream from it. These mines would threaten to pollute pristine water and damage the important forest habitat used by many types of wildlife. Sulfide-ore mining has a consistent record of devastating environmental harm, including contaminating waters, degrading forests, and unpredictable, catastrophic spills of toxic materials.

There are inherent risks to sulfide-ore mining, and it makes no sense to place what the Environmental Protection Agency calls the nation's most toxic industry in the BWCA watershed and within the Ceded Territory upon which the Band relies.

Therefore, White Earth is requesting that the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture take steps to permanently protect the Boundary Waters watershed from sulfide-ore mining. Specifically, we urge you to:

1. Ensure that no leasing of federal minerals occurs within the BWCA watershed by denying applications for new federal mineral leases and federal mineral lease renewals.

2. Withdraw the federally owned minerals within the BWCA watershed from the federal mineral leasing program.

3. Take any additional measures necessary to protect the BWCA watershed from the threat of sulfide-ore mining.

We urge you to ensure that the full extent of the risks posed by large-scale sulfide-ore mining in the BWCA headwaters are thoroughly considered in order to determine the best course for the future of the watershed and the tribal communities who rely on its clean water and intact forested habitats to exercise usufructuary rights.

Sincerely,

STEVEN "PUNKY" CLARK,
Vice-Chairman.

SPORTSMEN FOR THE
BOUNDARY WATERS,
Ely, MN, November 28, 2017.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we urge you to OPPOSE H.R. 3905, the so-called "Minnesota's Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act" when it is considered on the House floor.

Simply put, H.R. 3905 is a bill to allow sulfide-ore mining at the edge of the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), directly threatening one of America's most accessible and most-visited wilderness areas. At 1.1 million acres in size, the BWCAW is the largest wilderness east of the Rockies and north of the Everglades. This interconnected system of lakes, rivers, and streams provides unparalleled opportunities for solitude, recreation, hunting and fishing. The connections between Northern Minnesota's national forests, Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness, Voyageurs National Park, and Quetico Provincial Park makes this entire trans boundary area extremely susceptible to the threat of pollution from sulfide-ore mining, one of the most toxic industries in America, according to the EPA.

H.R. 3905 would require congressional approval of any mineral withdrawal or monument designation involving National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota and would provide for the perpetual renewal of federal mineral leases in Minnesota, including two that were denied by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The bill undermines the Antiquities Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Boundary Waters Wilderness Act, and other laws regulating mineral leasing in Minnesota's national forests.

Contrary to the bill's title, H.R. 3905 would do more harm than good for the economy of Northern Minnesota. Economic analysis by Key-Log Economics LLC shows that sulfide-ore mining on Superior National Forest lands in the watershed of the Boundary Waters could lead to the loss of nearly 5,000 jobs in tourism, 5,000 to 22,000 jobs in the rest of the economy, a \$1.6 billion loss in annual income, and a \$500 million reduction in private property values.

Specifically, we urge opposition to this bill because it would:

Renew two expired and undeveloped mineral leases on Superior National Forest lands next to the Boundary Waters and along lakes and rivers that flow directly into the Wilderness, advancing a foreign mining company's interests at the expense of beloved American public lands.

Void the December 2016 record of decision by the Forest Service withholding its consent to two mineral lease renewal requests in the Superior National Forest due to the un-

acceptable risks to this watershed, which according to the Forest Service holds 20 percent of the National Forest System's fresh water supply.

Undermine the National Environmental Policy Act by limiting review of these two mineral leases to a 30-day environmental assessment. Contrary to the bill language, there is no 'pending EA.' However, this section would override the ongoing two-year Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) initiated by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to carefully consider the potential impacts of sulfide-ore mining on the Boundary Waters watershed. The ongoing EIS is strongly supported by Minnesota's Governor Dayton and by the citizens of Minnesota. More than 79% of Minnesota voters support the study, while more than 126,000 citizens submitted comments during the scoping phase.

Amend the 1906 Antiquities Act by mandating Congressional approval for any national monument designations in Minnesota's national forests. The Antiquities Act is a bipartisan conservation law, which has been used by Presidents of both parties, to protect irreplaceable federal lands from potential threats. Monument designation under the Antiquities Act have provided protections for areas including the Grand Canyon, Acadia, Zion, Muir Woods, and Olympic National Parks. Quite simply, this attack on the Antiquities Act is an attack against our national parks and monuments.

Amend the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) by mandating Congressional approval for mineral withdrawals in Minnesota's national forests. Additionally, FLPMA intentionally left intact the presidential power to protect public lands as monuments.

Bar the Forest Service from complying with its legal obligations under the 1978 Boundary Waters Wilderness Act. In this Act Congress requires the Forest Service to maintain the high-water quality of the Boundary Waters and a Mining Protection Area within the Superior National Forest. The Forest Service concluded that sulfide-ore mining near the Boundary Waters would be "contrary to Congress' determination that it is necessary to 'protect the special qualities of the [BWCAW] as a natural forest-lakeland wilderness ecosystem of major esthetic, scientific, recreational and educational value to the Nation.'"

Make all mineral leases on Minnesota's national forests essentially perpetual. The 'perpetual' nature of these leases is material change in long-standing mineral leasing law and policy. The bill would also override the two laws (1946 and 1950) on mineral leasing in Minnesota's national forests that require Forest Service consent to any mining.

Ignore the request of the International Joint Commission that environmental review of impacts on trans boundary water quality and cumulative effects be studied and the requests of four tribal entities (the area is Ceded Territory).

Thank you for considering our concerns. In order to adequately protect iconic places like the Boundary Waters, Voyageurs National Park, and all of Minnesota's public lands, and bedrock environmental laws like the Antiquities Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, we urge you to OPPOSE H.R. 3905.

Sincerely,

BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS &
ANGLERS.
NATIONAL WILDLIFE
FEDERATION.
THEODORE ROOSEVELT
CONSERVATION
PARTNERSHIP.
FLY FISHERS

INTERNATIONAL.
MINNESOTA DIVISION, IZAAK
WALTON LEAGUE OF
AMERICA.
AMERICAN FLY FISHING
TRADE ASSOCIATION.
POPE AND YOUNG CLUB.
KEEPTIPUBLIC.ORG.

GIRL SCOUTS OF MINNESOTA AND
WISCONSIN LAKES AND PINES,

November 26, 2017.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS, I am writing to request you vote no on H.R. 3905, which is a bill that would stop a 2-year Forest Service study of environmental, economic, and social risks to the Boundary Waters from sulfide-ore copper mining on Superior National Forest lands in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

For over fifty years, Northern Lakes Canoe Base has offered wilderness canoe trips in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). I guided Girl Scout canoe trips for five years and have directed our wilderness program for 7 years and am writing this letter to describe the strengths of this program to you and to underscore the fact that this one-of-a-kind program cannot exist anywhere other than the Boundary Waters.

Girls who come on our canoe trips may have had basic camping and canoeing experiences, but few have experience in wilderness travel. We typically serve 150-200 girls a summer.

In general, girls travel in wilderness areas less than boys. Even in 2017, girls are taught to think that the outdoors is no place for a girl because it is hard work, dirty, and going to the mall is just much easier. We teach teenage girls, in a girl-only environment, that their individual strength and the power of teamwork is far greater than they ever imagined. They also learn that hard work and dirt is part of the fun on a Boundary Waters canoe trip, and they leave with an appreciation for the beauty of wilderness and an understanding of the challenges they now know they can overcome. Girl Scout wilderness canoe trips bring out the best in teenage girls; we see how creative, hardworking, and kind they can be to each other. It doesn't take much imagination to believe that these traits will follow them back to their everyday life.

We are a high quality, affordable program and pride ourselves on our thriftiness. We use our canoes for 20+ seasons and packs and paddles summer after summer. We do this so we can serve girls from all economic backgrounds, including local iron range and Native American communities.

For years we have received feedback from participants crediting their Boundary Waters experience for continued, life-long growth. Our program cannot exist somewhere other than the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. No other place on earth offers the perfect combination of accessibility and high adventure that the BWCAW offers. Many of our participants drive to Ely from Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. Many others fly to Minneapolis and then rent a car to get to Ely. Unlike many other wilderness areas which may be high on a mountain range or only accessible by high-clearance vehicles, it is easy for a mom or dad to drive a van full of girls to the Boundary Waters, send them on a trip, and then pick them up a week later.

The Boundary Waters is also unique in that, unlike many other wilderness areas, visitors don't require any previous experience or training to have a safe, adventurous trip. Anyone seeking adventure and challenge belongs on a canoe trip, not just body builders and endurance athletes. We have even seen that a Girl Scout canoe trip some-

times inspires girls who may be uninterested in athletics or leadership to seek out their own creative ways to be active and healthy, leading to improved confidence and greater aspirations. Again, it doesn't take much imagination to conclude that girls who experience wilderness travel will go on to make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts canoe trip participants always remark that the solitude they find in the Boundary Waters is unlike any they have found elsewhere, whether at their own Girl Scout resident camp or a state or national park. The quiet environment of a protected wilderness area gives them an opportunity to reflect on their life in a way that they could not in a non-wilderness setting. Girl Scouts end their canoe trip with a swagger to their step, ready to take on any challenge that comes their way.

Thank you for doing your part to preserve the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness by voting no on H.R. 3905. It means a lot to all of us in Ely whose programs and businesses are focused around wilderness travel.

Sincerely,

ANN MCNALLY,
Northern Lakes Canoe Base
Summer Program Director/Guide.

NOVEMBER 28, 2017.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Representative Tom Emmer's bill, H.R. 3905, is a dangerous piece of legislation that endangers the public land we as veterans fought to protect. This bill would allow a foreign mining conglomerate, Antofagasta, to build dangerous copper-nickel mines in the headwaters of America's most visited Wilderness Area, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Northeastern Minnesota. On behalf of Veterans for the Boundary Waters, I urge you to vote no on H.R. 3905.

The Boundary Waters is a place of healing for many veterans suffering from trauma or having difficulty readjusting to life at home. The peace found in this Wilderness is priceless, and if destroyed, we will be robbing future veterans of their chance to heal. One specific camp, Voyageur Outward Bound School (VOBS), provides vets-only trips to help veterans readjust to life at home through Wilderness experiences. This program has been incredibly successful. Unfortunately, VOBS is located on the same lake as the proposed mines and, if passed, H.R. 3905 would cause this camp to shut down, eliminating hundreds of American jobs by moving to Canada, and eliminating the opportunity for veterans to take advantage of these incredibly beneficial programs.

If passed, H.R. 3905 would have severe negative consequences for veterans in Minnesota and across the country. The Boundary Waters and Voyageurs National Park are public lands that are meant to be protected for veterans and their families to enjoy. H.R. 3905 would endanger these public lands and prohibit future generations of veterans from experiencing these national treasures. We have an obligation to honor our nation's veterans by protecting the same public lands they fought for.

Again, please VOTE NO on H.R. 3905.

Sincerely,

Erik Packard, Staff Sergeant U.S. Army and Army Reserve 1996-2004, 2006-2013; Joe Banavice, US Army Officer, Desert Storm 1st Armored Division; Craig Shaver, US Marine Corps Infantry, Operation Enduring Freedom; Sergio Manacero, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division.

NOVEMBER 6, 2017.

Re: H.R. 3905.

Member of the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MEMBER OF THE U.S. HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE: The undersigned coa-

litions, organizations, and businesses represent approximately 18 million sportsmen and sportswomen, 282 businesses, and the broad spectrum of users of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from across America. We stand united in strong opposition to H.R. 3905.

H.R. 3905 would require congressional approval of any mineral withdrawal or monument designation involving National Forest System lands in the State of Minnesota and would provide for the renewal of two federal mineral leases that were denied by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Specifically, the bill would:

Renew two mineral leases on Superior National Forest lands next to the Boundary Waters and along lakes and rivers that flow directly into the Wilderness. The now-expired mineral leases have never been developed into a mine.

Void the 18-page record of decision by the Forest Service withholding its consent to two mineral lease renewal requests. Peer-reviewed science documents that sulfide-ore copper mining on these lease areas would pollute the Boundary Waters. An overwhelming majority of the public supports this decision and by more than two to one, opposes copper mining near the Boundary Waters (2017 Fabrizio Ward poll).

Undermine the National Environmental Policy Act by limiting review of these two mineral leases to a 30-day environmental assessment. Contrary to the bill language, there is no 'pending EA.' The expired mineral leases have never undergone environmental review. Scientific evidence documents the potential for negative environmental harm to a national wilderness area (Boundary Waters) and a national park (Voyageurs National Park) if mining were allowed on these lease areas, and NEPA requires unrestricted environmental review.

Make all mineral leases on Minnesota's national forests essentially perpetual. The 'perpetual' nature of these leases is material change in long-standing mineral leasing law and policy.

Over-ride the two laws (1946 and 1950) on mineral leasing in Minnesota's national forests that require Forest Service consent to any mining.

Amend the 1906 Antiquities Act by mandating Congressional approval for any national monument designations in Minnesota's national forests.

Amend the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act by mandating Congressional approval for mineral withdrawals in Minnesota's national forests

Bar the Forest Service from complying with its legal obligations under the 1978 Boundary Waters Wilderness Act.

Ignore the request of the International Joint Commission that environmental review of impacts on transboundary water quality and cumulative effects be studied and the requests of four tribal entities (the area is Ceded Territory).

The Boundary Waters is the most-accessible and most-visited Wilderness area in the nation. It draws 155,000 visitors every year and provides unparalleled backcountry opportunities. At 1.1 million acres in size, it is the largest Wilderness east of the Rockies and north of the Everglades. The vast network of lakes, rivers, and streams that gives the Boundary Waters its name is the basis of our strong canoe culture. The Boundary Waters includes 1,200 miles of canoe and kayak routes and 2,000 designated campsites, and is home to some of the finest backcountry angling and hunting in the nation. Sportsmen and women ply the clean waters and healthy forests of the Wilderness in pursuit of walleye, bass, pike, trout, bear, deer, grouse, and wild rice.

The scientific evidence of harm to the Boundary Waters from sulfide-ore copper mining in the watershed is strong. Hydrologists say that pollution is inevitable—it is not ‘if’ but ‘when.’ Hardrock mining is the most toxic industry in America, according to the EPA. The acid mine drainage associated with this type of mining harms water, aquatic and terrestrial species, forests, and soils, and poses a serious risk to human health. Scientific and economic studies show that sulfide-ore copper mining along lakes and streams that flow directly into the Boundary Waters puts at risk not only our premiere fishing, hunting, and recreation on Superior National Forest lands, but also the strong, stable economy of Northeastern Minnesota. Economic analysis by Key-Log Economics LLC shows that sulfide-ore copper mining on Superior National Forest lands in the watershed of the Boundary Waters could lead to the loss of nearly 5,000 jobs in tourism, 5,000 to 22,000 jobs in the rest of the economy, a \$1.6 billion loss in annual income, and a \$500 million reduction in private property values.

H.R. 3905, an ill-advised effort to advance a foreign mining company’s interests at the expense of beloved public lands, would gut long-standing and powerful national conservation laws and undermine recent decisions by the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture to take a two-year pause in mining-related activity to analyze the risks of sulfide-ore copper mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters.

Agriculture Secretary Perdue and Interior Secretary Zinke support the ongoing Forest Service two-year study. H.R. 3905 would remove authority for them and their agencies to make appropriate and reasonable decisions to manage the Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters.

The ongoing two-year Forest Service study was initiated by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management after careful consideration of the potential impacts of sulfide-ore copper mining in the Boundary Waters watershed. It is strongly supported by Minnesota’s Governor Dayton and by the citizens of Minnesota. More than 79% of Minnesota voters support the study. More than 126,000 citizens submitted comments during the scoping phase and more than 3,000 people participated in three Forest Service listening sessions and, by a margin of nearly two-to-one, testified in support of protecting the Boundary Waters.

Sincerely,

Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters, By Jason Zabokrtsky, Chair, Representing 15 hunting and fishing organizations; Boundary Waters Business Coalition, By Steve Piragis, Chair, Representing 282 businesses from Minnesota and throughout America; Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters; By Becky Rom, Chair; Representing 26 conservation organizations; Veterans for the Boundary Waters; By Erik Packard, Chair, Representing military veterans; Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts for the Boundary Waters, By Ann McNally, Chair.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join them and to join me in opposing this bill, and I thank the gentleman from California for the time.

□ 1545

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, as a Californian who lives in a very rural part of the State that is economically in huge pain, when I see an opportunity for people in rural America to prosper,

to do well, I see, in H.R. 3905, again, this opportunity for the people in Minnesota.

The MINER Act, introduced by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER), will put it on the right track toward being able to extract the minerals that are needed for production of taking raw materials and making them into finished products here in the United States.

This bill addresses a 230,000-acre mineral withdrawal from Superior National Forest in Minnesota, which, really, it is about jobs and economic growth, while also maintaining clear standards for all projects across the Nation.

Indeed, this is a very narrow bill. It explores the possibilities, which is only a small step. Indeed, if mining was to occur, there is a litany of permits, years of process required to take that following step.

Indeed, the arbitrary decision, the day before President Obama left office, halted a \$400 million project, jeopardized 17,000 American jobs, cut \$3 billion from K–12 schools, and slashed \$2.5 billion annually from local governments and the State.

These types of effects I feel in my own district where our industries have been taken away. Any time there is a proposal to do anything like that, whether it is timber harvest, mining, or whatever, you then hear about how the whole zone is pristine and unique, never been touched. These operations can happen environmentally correctly, environmentally soundly, and that is the standard for which we have in this country, is that we will do things correctly now, and we will put them back when we are done.

Though a 20-year moratorium was imposed on the area, similar plans for mining have previously been approved by Congress twice. Mining operations across the country already commit to a strict environmental review process to ensure the public safety and the protection of natural resources, as we all expect. You mine an area under the strict guidelines, and you reclaim it.

In most cases, mining companies must also put up bonds to pay for cleanup, sometimes for billions of dollars before a single shovel is ever turned. In this case, we are talking about exploration of the area to see what the potential is.

This bill does not overturn existing Federal, State, or local environmental reviews. Instead, it ensures all projects are held to clear, consistent requirements, not arbitrary political decisions. Allowing politicians to prohibit one project or another, based solely on a whim, goes against American ideals of fairness and equal opportunity.

These minerals are essential to our economy. To those claiming that mining will damage the environment, I would ask you this: Where would you prefer that these minerals come from? Do you want the mining to occur here in America, under these kinds of strict

guidelines, bring American jobs to the front; or do we want to do it elsewhere in the world, places like China and others that have little respect for the environmental process or review or operations that are sustainable?

I think we should have it here. Where would you have us get our minerals? Where would you have us get the rare earth materials that are needed for production of new technologies?

H.R. 3905 protects Minnesota’s economy, schools, and State budget; it protects the rule of law; and it protects the domestic access to these important materials and minerals we need to have our economy get stronger—a very narrow scope; it is sound legislation and sound policy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge swift passage of this important legislation.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN).

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak in opposition to this legislation, and here is why: it threatens Minnesota’s Boundary Waters Canoe Area; it stops the scientific environmental review that is going on right now; it weakens the Antiquities Act; and it singles out Minnesota’s national forests as not being allowed the same environmental protections that national forests in every other State receive.

Now, northern Minnesota has a rich history of taconite mining. But the mine that is being proposed on the doorstep of the Boundary Waters, America’s most-visited wilderness, is a massive copper-sulfide mine, something we have no history of in Minnesota. It would threaten some of the cleanest and most pristine water and lakes in the country.

Today, there is a 2-year review going on of the mining leases to analyze the risks of copper-sulfide mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters. It is based on science. It is supported by Secretary Perdue. It is supported by Secretary Zinke. And I should note that Secretary Zinke is supporting a similar review of a proposed mine in Montana that borders Yellowstone National Park.

But this bill halts that scientific review and automatically grants the leases for the mine. If this becomes law, Minnesota’s land and water would be singled out as not worthy of the exact same environmental review and protections that exist in every other State in the country.

It carves out a special exemption for Minnesota from the Antiquities Act, which has been used on a bipartisan basis by 16 Presidents as a conservation tool to protect America’s history for future generations. And why should the land and history in Minnesota be less worthy of protection?

There are the public comments from more than 100,000 people, Mr. Speaker, that would be tossed aside.

Mr. Speaker, the Boundary Waters is Minnesota’s Yellowstone. Hundreds of thousands of people canoe and fish

there annually every year. It is a national treasure.

Some of the best memories of my life have taken place in the Boundary Waters as I grew up or, now, with my daughters. We owe it to future generations to understand the impact that copper-sulfide mining poses to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area; and that is why I am voting “no” on a bill that undermines science and puts Minnesota’s water at risk.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR), my friend and colleague, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3905, the Minnesota’s Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act, or the MINER Act. This act does not remove or reduce the permitting requirements should a future project ultimately be developed in the Superior National Forest.

But nearly a year after President Obama’s departure from the White House, I stand before this body to speak in favor of a bill that would rectify an injustice placed upon Minnesotans by the previous administration.

As we have heard throughout this debate, on President Obama’s last day in office, the previous administration pulled such a politically motivated stunt that appears more as a thumb-in-the-eye of hardworking Minnesotans than sound policy.

Without a second thought, and one stroke of his pen, President Obama proposed withdrawing over 200,000 acres from future mineral exploration while, simultaneously, rejecting a renewal application for a hard rock mining operation that had been renewed in 1989 and 2004, without controversy.

This decision endangered thousands of jobs. These are good-paying jobs that are significantly higher than the median average wage in Minnesota and the United States. Additionally, that decision could devastate the State’s permanent school trust fund that will support nearly 900,000 K–12 students statewide if the withdrawal application and canceled leases are not rejected. At a time when it is vital that our teachers and students are given the resources they require, it would be foolish to allow this to take place.

Some may ask why a Member from Arkansas would care about this decision. It is close to 1,000 miles away from my district to the Superior National Forest. The answer though is twofold, and it is simple.

The first, it restores Federal land management oversight back to where it belongs, the United States Congress. H.R. 3905 will prevent executive order overreach by requiring congressional approval of all mineral or monument withdrawals within National Forest System lands in Minnesota and reverses the unwarranted action taken under the Obama administration to

unilaterally block responsible mineral development in the Superior National Forest.

Secondly, as someone who represents communities, counties, and schools that depend on the safe, responsible harvest and mining of our natural resources, I understand the real devastation that will take place, not only in Minnesota, but possibly in my district and other areas across the country if H.R. 3905 is not passed.

Mr. Speaker, for the protection of our constitutional system of checks and balances, and preservation of rural economies, I believe that it is vital that we pass this piece of legislation. I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3905.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from 53 bipartisan Minnesota State legislators, a letter from Jobs for Minnesotans, and a letter from the Minnesota Pipe Trades Association.

NOVEMBER 27, 2017.

Congressman TOM EMMER,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN EMMER: As elected leaders of the Minnesota Legislature, we are writing in strong support of H.R. 3905. This legislation supports jobs, economic development and industry in Northeast Minnesota, and will reverse an onerous, overreaching and politically-motivated decision by the Obama Administration that withdrew nearly 240,000 acres of federal lands and minerals from potential development. H.R. 3905 will halt these last-minute land withdrawals, reinstate leases affected by that decision including the Twin Metals’ lease, and require congressional approval for any future withdrawals.

The decision by the Obama Administration last January put jobs and nearly \$2.5 billion of our state’s economy at risk. Furthermore, it risked the depression of the precious metals, technology, infrastructure and manufacturing industries in our state, and the economic well-being of Northeast Minnesota—a region where mining has been an economic anchor since the late nineteenth century. And that’s not to mention the estimated four billion ton deposit of copper, nickel, and other strategic minerals located within the Duluth Complex which could generate as much as \$3 billion in royalty revenues for the state’s Permanent School Trust Fund—resources that would support education for nearly 900,000 K–12 students across the state.

H.R. 3905 also reaffirms our shared commitment to the protection of our environment and support of a thorough and proper environmental review process for the mineral leases, as well as upholds our state’s commitment to restricting mineral development in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Mine Protection Area.

The expansion of the precious metals mining industry offers generations of Minnesotans thousands of good-paying jobs, billions of dollars in investment in industry, and billions of dollars in revenue for Minnesota schools. Moreover, it provides an incredible opportunity to further establish our nation’s economic and energy independence from foreign nations. The decision to remove vast amounts of federal land from potential development and blocking the Twin Metals’ federal mineral lease renewal was short-sighted and damaging. H.R. 3905 has our bipartisan support, and it is our sincere hope that it will become law for the well-being of our state and its citizens.

Sincerely,

Rep. Kurt Daudt, Speaker of the House;
Rep. Joyce Peppin, Majority Leader

Rep. Dan Fabian, Environment Committee Chair, House District 1A; Sen. Bill Ingebrigtesen, Environment Committee Chair, Senate District 8; Rep. Pat Garofalo, Jobs and Energy Committee Chair, House District 58B; Sen. Jerry Newton, Senate District 37, Legislative School Trust Commission; Rep. Julie Sandstede, House District 6A, Legislative School Trust Commission; Sen. Paul Gazelka, Majority Leader; Sen. Tom Bakk, Senate District 3; Rep. Chris Swedzinski, Mining and Outdoor Recreation Chair, House District 16A; Sen. David Tomassoni, Environment Committee Ranking Member, Senate District 6; Rep. Rob Ecklund, Assistant Minority Leader, House District 3A; Rep. Sandy Layman, House District 5B, Legislative School Trust Commission; Rep. Dale Lueck, House District 10B, Legislative School Trust Commission; Sen. John Hoffman, Senate District 36, Legislative School Trust Commission.

Rep. Brian Daniels, House District 24B; Rep. Brian Johnson, House District 32A; Rep. Rod Hamilton, House District 22B; Rep. Sondra Erickson, House District 15A; Rep. Bob Gunther, House District; Rep. Steve Draskowski, House District 21B; Sen. Justin Eichorn, Senate District 5, Legislative School Trust Commission; Rep. Jim Nash, House District 47A; Rep. Jason Rarick, House District 11B; Rep. Mary Franson, House District 8B; Rep. Jon Koznick, House District 58A; Rep. Paul Torkelson, House District 16B; Rep. Tony Albright, House District 55B; Rep. Bob Dettmer, House District 39A; Rep. Josh Heintzeman, House District 10A; Rep. Kathy Lohmer, House District 39B; Rep. Linda Runbeck, House District 38A; Rep. Bob Loonan, House District 55A; Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen, House District 18B; Rep. John Poston, House District 9A; Rep. Cal Bahr, House District 31B.

Rep. Cindy Pugh, House District 33B; Rep. Roz Peterson, House District 56B; Rep. Barb Haley, House District 21A; Rep. Deb Kiel, House District 1B; Rep. Matt Dean, House District 38B; Rep. Dean Urdahl, House District 18A; Rep. Tama Theis, House District 14A; Rep. Steve Green, House District 2B; Rep. Matt Bliss, House District; Rep. Mike Sundin, House District 11A; Rep. Dave Baker, House District 17B; Sen. Mary Kiffmeyer, Senate District 30; Sen. Jerry Relph, Senate District 14; Rep. Tim Miller, House District 17A; Rep. Mary Kunesch-Podein, House District 41B, Legislative School Trust Commission; Sen. Mark Johnson, Senate District 1; Sen. Paul Utke 2, Senate District.

JOBS FOR MINNESOTANS,

Nov. 22, 2017.

Re In Support of MINER Act.

Hon. ERIK PAULSEN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN PAULSEN: I’m writing on behalf of legislation described below but wanted to let you know I had submitted a request to meet in person, as I plan to be in Washington the week after Thanksgiving. I hope you have time to meet with me. Thank you for considering.

On behalf of the coalition Jobs for Minnesotans, which represents business, labor and communities across the state, I am writing in strong support of H.R. 3905, the Minnesota’s Economic Rights in the Superior National Forest Act, known as the MINER Act. This bipartisan legislation sponsored by Congressman Tom Emmer (MN–6th) and co-sponsored by Congressmen Collin Peterson (MN–7th), Jason Lewis (MN–2nd) and Paul Gosar (AZ–4th) seeks to ensure the proper consideration of future job growth and economic opportunity in northeastern Minnesota by requiring congressional approval

of any mineral withdrawal or monument designation involving the National Forest System lands in the state. It also provides for the renewal of certain mineral leases and ensuring that future leases in northeastern Minnesota remain valid and renewed as outlined by current law. H.R. 3905 is currently before the House Rules Committee and is expected to reach the House floor in coming weeks.

H.R. 3905 leaves intact existing environmental review processes and standards and restates Congress' prohibition of any mining activity in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and surrounding protective buffer. As such, it reaffirms long-standing Congressional intent in management and development of critical minerals in Minnesota and cuts bureaucratic delays in assessing responsible mine project proposals.

Unfortunately, federal agency actions in December 2016 jeopardized the economic future of the region by canceling valid, long-standing federal mineral leases and withdrawing 235,000 acres of federal land in the region from future mining development. This was contrary to the previous directives by Congress in 1950 and again in 1978. In 1950 Congress made land available for mineral exploration and development within the Superior National Forest (SNF) within the Iron Range region. In 1978, while Congress prohibited mining within the BWCAW and an adjacent protective buffer zone, it also reaffirmed that mining should be allowed and promoted in the remaining area of the SNF.

The agency actions in 2016 would block the potential creation of thousands of jobs, billions of dollars in economic growth, and billions more in revenues for Minnesota's public schools through mineral development on state school trust lands.

H.R. 3905 aims to correct these injustices, which is why we strongly urge you to cast your vote in support of it. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

NANCY NORR,
Board Chair,
Jobs for Minnesotans.

MINNESOTA PIPE
TRADES ASSOCIATION,
November 28, 2017.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of more than 9500 men and women working in various piping related industries throughout the state of Minnesota, I am writing to express our support of H.R. 3905, Minnesota's Economic Rights (MINER) in the Superior National Forest Act.

On January 5, 2017, the previous administration proposed a 234, 328-acre federal mineral withdrawal of National Forest System lands, for a 20-year term, within the Rainy River Watershed in the Superior National Forest. The action immediately placed this area off limits to development for up to two years while the withdrawal is considered. The total withdrawal application boundary spans 425,000 acres, including 95,000 acres of state school trust fund lands.

With this policy in place, Minnesotans lost their mineral rights. Unable to utilize these natural resources, 17,000 jobs are at risk and roughly \$2.5 billion of economic activity is jeopardized. Many members of the Minnesota Pipe Trades Association are depending on these jobs.

The Minnesota Pipe Trades Association (MPTA) fully supports the thorough regulatory process in place in the State of Minnesota. It is our belief this process is adequate in determining whether a project should move forward, or not.

As a result, MPTA is in support of H.R. 3905, Minnesota's Economic Rights (MINER)

in the Superior National Forest Act, and urge the immediate passage of this bipartisan legislation.

Sincerely,

DAVID M. YBARRA II,
President,
Minnesota Pipe Trades Association.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I am most proud of is being from Minnesota. What a beautiful State that we have. People joke about how cold it is in the wintertime, but let me tell you, Minnesota is awesome all year round.

One of the things that we are so proud of is the Boundary Waters. Mr. Speaker, look at this picture. This is no glossed-up photo. This is what it looks like. It is awesome.

Back before I was in Congress, I was able to bring young people to the Boundary Waters who were court-involved. Mr. Speaker, one day a judge asked me: Hey, Ellison, come up here. You want to take some kids to the Boundary Waters?

I said: Fine. I kept doing it for 5 years straight because I loved the place.

Yet this bill will perhaps damage all that, all that beauty, that gem of our State, which not only is a beautiful place that needs to be preserved for people, but also is a job-generator. A lot of people earn good livings because of the Boundary Waters, and if we just do this, pass this bill, what it will do is jeopardize their livelihood and our crown jewel of our State.

This bill will grant a mining company the right to build sulfide-ore copper mines along rivers and lakes that flow directly into the Boundary Waters. Sulfide-ore copper mining has never been done without polluting water, and thousands of communities and wildlife will be at risk.

When you mine sulfide ore, water and air interact to create sulfuric acid. One leak or spill would contaminate substantial portions of the Boundary Waters, decimating wildlife and habitat, and destroying the livelihoods of so many Minnesota workers.

The Boundary Waters, the waters of the Boundary Waters, are especially vulnerable to acid mine drainage because they lack a buffering capacity.

This bill is a bad idea, and I urge Members to vote "no." This bill will undermine core environmental laws, including the Antiquities Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Antiquities Act is a bipartisan conservation law to protect irreplaceable Federal lands, including in the Grand Canyon, Acadia Forest, Zion, Muir Woods in California, and the Olympic National Parks. If they undermine the Antiquities Act, what else is in danger? Well, I would say every national treasure of the United States.

This attack on the Antiquities Act is an attack against our national parks

and monuments, making this not only a Minnesota issue, but a national issue.

This bill would permanently lock in all mineral leases on Minnesota's national forests by overriding two laws on mineral leasing in Minnesota's national forests that require Forest Service consent to any mining. They don't want to go around the regular process. They want to use Congress to short-circuit that process.

If you have never been to the Boundary Waters, as I said, I urge you to go there. If you vote "no" on this bill, you will not just be protecting the Boundary Waters for yourself and people around all over the United States, you will be protecting it for your grandchildren.

Much is said here about children and grandchildren. Think about the Boundary Waters when you think about the legacy that we are leaving our grandchildren and how H.R. 3905 would destroy and jeopardize that legacy.

Economic analysis by Key-Log Economics shows that sulfide-ore mining on the Superior National Forest lands and the watershed of the Boundary Waters could lead to a loss of 5,000 jobs in tourism, 5,000 to 20,000 jobs in the rest of the economy.

□ 1600

As people tout this bill as a job creator, it is a job destroyer. I would tell you that, if you are an outfitter or you are a wilderness guide or you are a forest ranger, your job is just as important as anybody else's. What this bill is saying is, no, your job is no good. Nobody cares about it. Only the mine companies' interests are important.

We could stand to lose \$1.6 billion in annual income and \$500 million in reduction in private property values because of this piece of legislation.

We shouldn't have to choose between a robust economy and a clean environment. We can and must have both. Saying "no" to this piece of legislation gives us a chance at both. Voting for it makes us pick one over the other, and not just economic interests, but certain interests—not everyone's.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the extra time.

Mr. Speaker, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are studying this issue, but the author doesn't want to wait for the study because he knows the study is not going to help. They just want to drive this mine straight through without doing the proper care.

More than 126,000 Americans participated in the study and asked for protection of the Boundary Waters. Minnesota voters oppose copper mining near the Boundary Waters by more than 2 to 1, and 79 percent support the current study.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this. This is a bad bill. It is not good legislation, and the damage it will do is not Republican nor is it Democratic. It is American. Vote "no."

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER), the originator of this bill.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the additional time, and I recognize my esteemed colleague, the Representative from Minnesota, for his love of the Boundary Waters that we both share.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address the Representative from California first on the claim that H.R. 3905 solely benefits a foreign mining company.

I think you should ask the people of our State. You should ask a gentleman by the name of Dan Forsman, who, as a Minnesotan, has a family heritage of benefiting by mining in our State. He was recently ridiculed by environmentalists in *The New York Times* because, while he loves the place where he lives, he also wants to make a living in the place where he lives. There are several other companies exploring the area.

Teck has nonferrous mineral holdings within the proposed withdrawal, the potential development of which would be greatly impacted by the withdrawal.

Encampment Minerals, Inc., also has a nonferrous mineral holding within the withdrawal area and is awaiting Federal agency action on a submitted preference right lease application.

Future expansion of the Northshore Mining taconite mine could extend into the withdrawal area and, thus, be impacted by the withdrawal.

PolyMet has invested hundreds of millions on projects that will be negatively impacted by the proposed mineral withdrawal, one of which we voted on here last night.

Further, the withdrawal proposal will seriously hinder the State's ability to seek mineral development of more than 90,000 acres of State school trust fund lands within the withdrawal area.

Twin Metals is a Minnesota company and has been part of the northeastern Minnesota community for 10 years. The company has invested more than \$400 million in project development activities, investing in new facilities in the city of Ely, providing local employment opportunities and supporting hundreds of local jobs in the construction, consulting, and contracting sectors. By the way, they also support all the outfitters, the wonderful businesses of tourism. Twin Metals has also contributed more than \$320,000 to local philanthropic needs and organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I would add that nothing in this bill alters any current environmental law or protection. The Antiquities Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, NEPA, and all the other laws still apply to Minnesota.

At the end of the day, we are protecting the Boundary Waters, we are

protecting the Superior National Forest, and we believe both the economy and tourism, the environment, can co-exist in northern Minnesota.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 9½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about jobs. Jobs, this is going to be great job creator, this mine. I just want to highlight, though, some of the very inaccurate numbers that have been tossed around today.

The sponsor of the bill earlier today said that 10,000 jobs would be created. The majority's legislative analysis says that the bill will create 17,000 jobs, but that is not correct. That is not correct. Even the company behind the project doesn't claim that many jobs.

In their May 2017 fact sheet, and this is the fact sheet for Twin Metals of Minnesota, they report that once operational, they will directly employ 650 people and "will create an estimated 1,300 spinoff jobs in other industries." That is 1,950 jobs. That is good, but that is a long way and a far cry from 10,000 or 17,000 jobs.

Let's also look at the down side. An economic study of the tourism industry in the region has shown that putting in a copper mine could result in the loss of nearly 5,000 direct jobs and up to 22,000 indirect jobs.

That is a terrible tradeoff, and that means that this mine is potentially a net job destroyer, not a creator.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to protect jobs and to oppose H.R. 3905.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make sure that my friends on the other side are aware of a simple fact, and that fact is very important in this debate: water flows downhill.

They make a big deal about the fact that no mining would take place in the Boundary Waters, but how happy would you be if someone dumped millions of gallons of toxic waste just uphill from your home and said not to worry because they didn't dump anything in your house?

These leases that we are talking about are right on the border of the Boundary Waters wilderness area. Take a look at this map. These red parts are the leases we are talking about. There is no gap. There is no buffer. Any acid mine waste from these leases will flow right into the Boundary Waters. There is no protection in this bill for the Boundary Waters. There is only terrible risk.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind everybody I am wearing a copper tie, and that is because I come from Arizona. We are known as the 5 Cs: for the cot-

ton, for the climate, for the cattle, for the citrus, and for copper. It is a critical mineral.

We have seen these displays here in the well this morning, diverting the public's attention about what truly is actually here.

This is actually a cite to explain to people exactly the clear definition. Let's look at this.

What you see in red and yellow, just like a light that you see red, stop; yellow, caution; green, go, the red is the Boundary Waters. The red is the Boundary Waters: no mining, no mining whatsoever. The yellow is a buffer.

By the way, the only place in the United States in which a monument is surrounded by a buffer: no, don't proceed.

They confused you with that map. This is where we are talking about, down in here, in the green area. It is not the Boundary Waters. The pictures you saw that were in the well so eloquently shown to us were of the Boundary Waters, not where the mining is going to take place.

Let's dispel the rumors. Let's get back down to facts.

Red, no mining; yellow, no mining; green, okay. But that is following rules. That is following all rules.

Once again, just to remind folks back home that are watching, the red is the Boundary Waters. There is no mining in the Boundary Waters. The pictures you saw in the well are of the Boundary Waters. No mining occurs in the Boundary Waters.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the overwhelming local opposition to a copper-sulfide mine right next to the Boundary Waters.

A poll done earlier this year found that 59 percent of Minnesotans oppose copper-sulfide mining near the Boundary Waters. Seventy-nine percent support the existing 2-year study that the Forest Service is doing on this type of mining. Included in that 79 percent, 67 percent of Republicans support the existing 2-year study that the Forest Service is doing. We are not talking about a bunch of antimining activists. This is not them.

The same poll found that, overall, Minnesotans support copper-sulfide mining in the State 43 percent to 33 percent. The people in the State of Minnesota know that there are right places to have these kinds of mines and there are wrong places to have these kinds of mines. The Boundary Waters are the wrong place. The people of Minnesota know it, the Forest Service knows it, and I hope that the Congress realizes it and knows it, too.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the charge is Minnesotans strongly oppose mining near the

Boundary Waters, so let's go back, remind everybody back at home about the red. We are not talking about the red or the yellow in the previous document. Let's go through what we see.

Minnesota's Democratic Governor was for mining in the area before he was against it. Several polls over the years consistently show strong support for copper-nickel mining in general and for allowing companies to explore and propose projects.

In November of 2016, a poll of 400 registered voters in the Eighth Congressional District found, among other results, by greater than a 3 to 1 margin, survey respondents support environmentally responsible mining in the region.

By greater than 2-to-1 margins, respondents support the building of a new copper-nickel mine and believe copper-nickel mining can be done in an environmentally responsible way. They demand that. More than 60 percent support an underground copper-nickel project, the Twin Metals mine.

In October 2013, a poll of more than 600 registered Minnesota voters statewide found, among other results, a majority of voters, 56 percent, favor expanding Minnesota's mining industry.

A plurality of voters, 48 percent, support expanding the nickel-copper mining industry in the State.

All mayors, State legislators, the county commissioners that represent the Iron Range region, and the area proposed for the withdrawal are prominent advocates. Fifty-three bipartisan State legislators, including leadership of both parties, have endorsed the bill and support the passage.

Why is that?

These aren't just your average jobs. They don't pay service wages of \$20,000. These are \$100,000 plus and, additionally, have benefits. Those are jobs that Americans sink their teeth into. That is what built America.

Stay tuned. I am going to show you some other photos of how they really look at mining.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

□ 1615

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. Mr. Speaker, I brought this poster to the floor earlier. I bring it again up here. This is the proposed area in which the Twin Metals mine has been looking at doing the sulfide-copper ore mining, which, as I pointed out, 92 percent of the mines have polluted water quality. All of them have had leakage or seepage. This is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area up here. We keep hearing about how it is just adjacent.

Mr. Speaker, this is an underground corridor, and this is an underground corridor. This is a deposit. This is where all of the mining activity would take place.

Mr. Speaker, I don't see how open water creates a physical boundary to stop pollution. The pollution will go up north of the Laurentian Divide, and it will seep and go into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, 1,000 lakes, rivers, and streams. This is mining adjacent to a wilderness that will become forever polluted if this mine is to be built.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill alters no current environmental laws or protections. Mining companies will still have to comply with the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, NEPA, and all State and Federal laws.

In fact, the local communities—everybody wants clean water. These people actually live in the area. These local communities actually want mining in Minnesota. It results in cleaner water. This is actually a viewpoint of an actual mine site. This is a long time ago. This is a pit. What ends up happening is, they are very proud, because Minnesota is proud of their water.

This picture is before, and this is after. Can you imagine local municipalities and towns lining up for this water? This is the cleanest water in Minnesota. This is how they will actually reclaim the water. This isn't me. These are the people from the area who gave us these photos. And if you want to see an in-depth video, go to YouTube and look up the video that the people back in this region put together. This actually shows you, this is clean water. This is where you have pristine fisheries. They line up for this water.

There are no environmental hazards. Minnesota's mining industry has been proud of what they have actually built. Once again, before and after, it is an inconceivable difference.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I would like the chairman to answer a question. That pit that the gentleman just showed us, is that a taconite pit or is that a sulfide pit in Minnesota?

Mr. GOSAR. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GOSAR. That is a taconite pit.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. We are not talking about taconite. We are talking about sulfide.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman is talking about this whole aspect, the gentleman is right, but it is about all mining. This isn't just about copper mining. This is about taconite and all other mining.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would like to talk about that because of what type of mine this is. As has been pointed out, northern Minnesota has had a long history of mining, but the mine that we are talking about here is not like any other mine in the State. This is a copper-sulfide mine. These types of mines

are notorious for generating acid mine drainage.

As the Forest Service puts it: These mines are known worldwide for producing acid mine drainage that requires continuous management and perpetual water treatment.

Even in the absence of a major spill, having this acidic waste chronically leaking into the environment will create a problem that will last for generations and may never be fixed.

A study of 14 similar copper mines found that all but one had significant water quality impacts due to failures of the water collection and treatment systems from keeping the contamination from seeping out.

As was pointed out by the opposition, the majority, most of these mines are in dry areas of the American Southwest where there is far less water that needs to be treated than in a very wet environment like northern Minnesota.

The Forest Service also describes the specific threat that the Boundary Waters are under. They point out that there is "a direct flow of water from these leases to the Boundary Waters, and that there is a high likelihood of acid mine drainage from these ores, and that the drainage from the mine is likely to be highly acidic."

Mr. Speaker, once the problem starts, it is nearly impossible to make it stop. This is a perfect storm for destroying the Boundary Waters, and it is not worth the risk.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the gentleman from California. Can the gentleman give me an example of a mine that he actually supports?

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOSAR. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I am here to say that there are many mines in the State of Minnesota that I do support, that are ecologically—that are protected, but this is a different mine. We are only talking about one type of mine.

Mr. GOSAR. Reclaiming my time, once again, the gentleman can't identify a single mine that is permissible to the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I think that we have made a very strong case that economically this does not make sense. It could potentially destroy the tourist industry. What makes Minnesota unique is the wilderness areas, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. There is a tremendous risk because there has never been this type of mining in Minnesota before.

As was pointed out by the Forest Service, there is a very high risk of

acidic discharge, and that the mine will drain into the Boundary Waters. This is the wrong project at this time, and I urge a “no” vote.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We have heard some other charges that H.R. 3905 changes five Federal laws for Minnesota’s national forests. This bill alters no current environmental laws or protections. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, NEPA, and all other environmental laws still apply to Minnesota.

Let’s go through this history. In 1950, Congress took action to make land available for mineral exploration and development within the Superior National Forest. Congress did. Then again, in 1978, Congress passed the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act, a compromise that prohibited mining within the 1.1 million acre Boundary Waters; once again, the red area and the yellow. No mining.

But again, it specifically authorized mining in the Superior National Forest, the green. Once again, red, no; yellow, no; green, go. But that is fulfilling all current legislative and environmental laws.

The General Mining Act of 1872 that we heard about earlier governs most mining on Federal lands. However, in this case, it does not. It is the Weeks Act that controls projects in this area because they are located on acquired National Forest mineral leases on these lands. There are no indefinite agreements. They typically retain a nondiscretionary right—nondiscretionary right, once again—to renew every 20 years. The two leases for the mineral deposit in question began in 1966, were renewed in 1989, and again in 2004, without controversy.

The MINER Act halts last-minute political mineral withdrawals by requiring congressional approval. Once again, the magical words are “congressional approval.” The return to federalism—amazing—renews those two mining leases that were denied for political reasons under the same terms they were renewed twice previously and ensures any future mining projects will have to satisfy all existing environmental permitting requirements, including NEPA.

These people demand that they do it in a righteous way. There is no digging right now. These are proposed. The Minnesotans whom I came up to visit, they happily shared their history and their area with me. They want it done right because they have to live with the consequences; not somebody who comes from Twin Cities once in a blue moon.

Once again, let’s go back. This is the Boundary Waters. This is what you have heard misrepresented all the way around. There is no mining going on in the Boundary Waters. There is no mining going on in the buffer area. Once again, no other buffer exists around a

national monument except this. This is hallowed ground. Green, go.

Now, it is also very unfortunate that we hear rumors going around from Members of Congress that the Department of the Interior actually is against this. That rumor is far from the truth. We just received an email from the Secretary of the Interior that they are not opposed to this bill.

I include in the RECORD a list of over 150 groups, individuals, and community leaders who now want to be on record as supporting the lawful aspects of returning this back to the folks in Minnesota for mining.

ENDORSEMENTS OF H.R. 3905

53 bipartisan state legislators (including leadership of both parties); AFL-CIO International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental, and Reinforcing Iron Workers Local Union 512; Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona; ALLETE; American Exploration & Mining Association; Americans for Limited Government; Apache County (Arizona); Apache Sun Golf Club; APEX; Arizona Association of Conservation Districts; Arizona Cattle Feeders Association; Arizona Golf Association; Arizona Pork Council; Arizona Liberty; Arizona State Rep. Bob Thorpe; Associated General Contractors of Minnesota; AZ BASS Nation; AZ Deer Association; The Bass Federation; Better in our Back Yard; Cactus and Pine Golf Superintendents Association supports H.R. 3905; City of Ely.

Colorado Mining Association; Competitive Enterprise Institute; Concerned Citizens for America (Arizona); Conservatives for Property Rights; Dena Cordova Jack, Executive Vice President, Mountain States Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association; Global Minerals Engineering LLC; Golden Vertex Corporation; Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce; Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 31; International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 49; The Jamar Company; Jefferson County Commissioner Donald Rosier, P.E.; Jobs for Minnesotans; Laborers District Council of MN & ND; Laborers International Union of North America; Laurentian Chamber of Commerce; Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council; Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; MiningMinnesota; Minnesota Pipe Trades Association.

Minnesota Power; Minnesota State Rep. Josh Heintzeman; Montana Mining Association; National Mining Association; National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association; New Mexico Cattle Growers’ Association; New Mexico Federal Lands Council; New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc.; North America’s Building Trade Unions; Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 589; Range Association of Municipalities and Schools; Scott W. Yates, President, Denver Lumber Co.; Shake Rattle & Troll Outdoors; Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative; Twin Metals Minnesota; United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; Water Resource Institute; Women’s Mining Coalition; Yavapai County Cattle Growers; Yavapai County Supervisor Board Chairman Thomas Thurman; Yuma County (AZ) Chamber of Commerce.

OTHER GROUPS SUPPORTIVE OF ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE BILL

62 bipartisan state legislators (including leadership of both parties); Chair of the MN Permanent School Fund Commission; Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce; Dale Lueck, Chair of the Minnesota Legislative Permanent School Fund Commission; Duluth Chamber of Commerce;

Fairmont Chamber of Commerce; Fergus Falls Chamber of Commerce; Greater North Dakota Chamber of Commerce; Iron Mining Association of Minnesota; Laborers District Council of MN & ND; Lake County Board of Commissioners; Metro North Chamber of Commerce; Minnesota Association of School Administrators—Region 7; Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters; Owatonna Chamber of Commerce; Rochester Chamber of Commerce; St. Louis County Board of Commissioners; Twin West Chamber of Commerce; Up North Jobs; Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board; Willmar Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, what transpired here was a travesty. As I outlined, historically, Congress dictated twice in a usual fashion this green area for go. They designed the Boundary Waters and a buffer area for protection.

Once again, no Boundary Waters—you are being misled—no Boundary Waters are having mining. This is as clear as it gets. What ended up happening was in an illegal action by the President last year, or earlier this year, he wiped this away.

This doesn’t wipe away any environmental laws. What it does is, it returns it to the way it was. The way that it should be; the way that Congress dictated. Federalism, a return to the people in that State.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everybody to vote for this bill and support this bill. I also ask everybody to go to a video that has been produced by the people in this iron-ore range to see exactly how the people of that area of Minnesota actually feel about it. It is magnificent.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. GRIJALVA

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 2, line 19, strike “and”.

Page 2, line 22, strike the period at the end and insert “; and”.

Page 2, after line 22, insert the following new subparagraph:

(C) shall have a royalty rate of not less than 16.66 percent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 631, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, the American people are getting ripped off in this bill. The Chilean mining conglomerate behind this bill makes out like a bandit.

They get two expired leases back, as well as exemptions from several key environmental laws that could be used

to stop any of their dreams of massive profits from a giant copper mine.

The American people are the ones that are getting ripped off. This land is being given away for next to nothing. For the past 50 years, the leaseholder has been paying rent of \$1 an acre per year. Think about that, \$1 an acre per year, unchanged for 50 years. The American people are the landlords here. They are charging the Chilean company about \$420 per month for 5,000 acres of prime land right next to the most visited wilderness area in the country.

□ 1630

I can only imagine how many hard-working Americans would desperately love to be guaranteed having only to pay \$420 a month for their homes for as long as they want, particularly if their home was over 2 million square feet, as these leases are.

But we are not talking about someone building a house here. We are talking about a giant, destructive copper-sulfide mine that threatens one of the greatest unspoiled natural spaces in the country, the Boundary Waters Wilderness. Don't be fooled by the claims that the Boundary Waters are protected in this bill. They are not even remotely protected.

Copper-sulfide mining results in acid mine drainage, the same kind of pollution that comes from abandoned coal mines and has destroyed thousands of miles of streams and rivers throughout Appalachia. Acid mine drainage from these leases would flow into the Boundary Waters into a neighboring Canadian wilderness and into Voyageurs National Park. This would permanently impact millions of acres of lakes, rivers, fish and wildlife habitat, and risk the entire tourism and recreation economy of the region.

The majority says it is all worth it because of all the money that will flow into the State's coffers and be used for education. Give me a break. The only education benefit from this legislation would be children learning the chemistry of how acidic water flows out of mines, the biology of dead fish, and the economics of a shattered tourism and recreation industry.

But if the majority is truly concerned about the amount of money that a destroyed wilderness can bring to the State, they should be embarrassed by the sweetheart deals in these leases: \$1 per acre per year and a royalty of 4½ percent on production. These numbers are absurd. These rock-bottom prices effectively subsidize a foreign company to mine on public lands right next to an irreplaceable wilderness.

My amendment would make sure that the company would pay a royalty rate of just over 60 percent because that is the same rate that Senator MURKOWSKI has determined that companies should pay for oil that would come from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. If that is the cost of destroyed

wilderness in the Arctic, then it should be no cheaper to destroy wilderness in Minnesota.

With the extra billions of dollars the State receives from the more reasonable royalty rate, perhaps they could fund education and also help all the owners and employees of tourism and recreation companies that would be put out of business by a giant copper mine.

To be clear, I will not support H.R. 3905 even if this amendment is adopted. But Members should be given the opportunity to demonstrate that they don't believe that a foreign mining company should be allowed to get public land and public resources at rock-bottom rates and out in the West for free.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the taxpayers, support my amendment, and oppose the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, in July, the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources heard all about how royalties, if ill-constructed, serve only to disincentivize investment in self-sufficiency and increase our reliance on imported critical minerals.

This amendment is a hallmark example of such a poorly designed royalty. This amendment doesn't specify what the royalty will be applied to, when in the mining process it will be assessed, and it doesn't even have a cap, for that matter. This amendment is just a thinly veiled means to prevent this important mining project from getting off the ground. The author actually stated that in his comments.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this amendment. I ask all Members to vote against it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me just close by saying that this precedent being set here with H.R. 3905 is a precedent that I think every Member of Congress needs to consider.

The backdrop is a mining law of 1872 that has not been changed one iota since then that basically provides the public resources, the extraction of our public lands for free to any company and more prevalent now are foreign mining companies. No return to the taxpayer and no consequences considered on the environmental damage that these mines have caused, the abandoned mines that haven't been cleaned up.

This is a backdrop to a deeper and more serious problem that this Congress has to grapple with, which is the mining law of 1872, and on this piece of legislation a precedent that establishes a template that can be destructive for

the future and cut the public and the processes out that involve the public and safeguard the environment at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on the amendment, a "no" vote on the underlying legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, once again, we may want to go back to misinformation. This does not pertain to the Mining Act of 1872. In fact, this is under the Weeks Act, which controls projects in this area because they are located on acquired natural forest land. Mineral leases on these lands, though not indefinite agreements, typically retain nondiscretionary right for renewal every 20 years.

The two leases for mineral deposits in question began in 1966, were renewed in 1989, and again in 2004 without controversy.

I would also like to take the opportunity to go through a number of groups that actually are against this amendment and endorse the bill.

Fifty-three bipartisan State legislators from the State of Minnesota are for this bill: "As elected leaders of the Minnesota Legislature, we are writing in strong support of H.R. 3905. This legislation supports jobs, economic development and industry in northeast Minnesota, and will reverse an onerous, overreaching, and politically motivated decision by the Obama administration. H.R. 3905 has bipartisan support, and it is our sincere hope that it will become law for the well-being of our State and its citizens."

A second one from the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools:

The results of the withdrawal and a potential 20-year moratorium would have a devastating impact on the financial support for our statewide public school system and future generations of Iron Rangers who would be employed in any future mining developments. It has been estimated that within 20 years of mining for precious metals, our Permanent School Trust Fund would reap nearly \$3 billion in royalties if allowed to go forward. The Miner Act does not infringe or restrict these very strenuous and stringent environmental review processes, and we emphasize there will be no mining in the Boundary Waters or the buffer zone specifically surrounding the Boundary Waters.

Let's go to the next one from the American Exploration & Mining Association: "H.R. 3905 will eliminate delays, return to good stewardship of fair process and restore the opportunity to explore strategic metals critical to our economy and national security in one of the richest mineral deposits in the Nation. . . . The emerging mining industry is an investment in the future well-being of our State and Nation; without this legislation, that future is at risk."

Here is another one from the Competitive Enterprise Institute: "The bipartisan H.R. 3905 is a welcome reassertion of congressional authority over public lands. Article 4 of the Constitution vests Congress—not the President—with plenary power over public

lands. Members on both sides of the aisle should take umbrage at President Obama's lameduck machinations to withdraw from the multiple-use framework more than 230,000 acres of public lands in Minnesota—with the mere stroke of a pen. By treating public lands regulation as a means to build a Presidential legacy through midnight regulation, the previous administration flouted the spirit of participatory and inclusive lands-use statutes as designed by Congress. Lawmakers should correct the course by passing the excellent H.R. 3905."

Finally, the Associated General Contractors of Minnesota:

H.R. 3905 changes no environmental review processes, relaxes no environmental standards, and specifically restates Congress' prohibition on any mining activity in the Boundary Waters and surrounding protective buffer areas. H.R. 3905 would reaffirm longstanding congressional intent that actually espouses that this area be designated for mining and timber sales.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everybody to vote against this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GALLAGHER). Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended, and on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of H.R. 3905 is postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1892. An act to amend title 4, United States Code, to provide for the flying of the flag at half-staff in the event of the death of a first responder in the line of duty.

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 100-458, section 114(b)(2)(c), the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, announces the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of the John C. Stennis for Public Service Training and Development for a six-year term:

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

The message also announced that pursuant to the provision of section 1151 of title 2, United States Code, as amended, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, reappoints the following individual to the Board of Trustees of the Open World Leadership Center:

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 115-77, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, appoints the following individuals to the Frederick Douglas Bicentennial Commission:

The Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Dr. David Anderson of New York.

CONGRATULATING LA TOYA CANTRELL, THE MAYOR-ELECT OF NEW ORLEANS

(Mr. RICHMOND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with extreme joy and excitement. My hometown, which is New Orleans, a part of my congressional district, next year, will celebrate our 300th anniversary. Over the years, we were under French control, we were under Spanish control, we were back under French control, and then we had the Louisiana Purchase. But as we walk into our 300th year, we have an elected—and we will be under the control of—female mayor for the first time in New Orleans history. That female is LaToya Cantrell.

She is a community activist and she is very focused on the future. I just want to congratulate LaToya on being elected to be the mayor of the city of New Orleans, and just to assure the people of New Orleans that we are going to go forward in our 300th year together and continue to improve the greatest city in the world, and that is New Orleans, Louisiana.

Mr. Speaker, I, once again, congratulate LaToya Cantrell on her election to be mayor of the city of New Orleans.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TROOPER DAMON ALLEN

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as Americans gathered around their Thanksgiving tables, joined hands with their families, and gave thanks for their blessings, a Texas Highway Patrol trooper was murdered.

While returning to his patrol car during a routine traffic stop, Trooper Damon Allen was shot in the back by a dastardly criminal, the driver of that vehicle. Trooper Allen was working alone, as most troopers in Texas do. The multiple shots killed Trooper Allen.

The crook had illegally procured a weapon in Trooper Allen's homicide. The criminal, like most do, quickly fled the scene, leading Texas Rangers and other law enforcement on a chase across Texas, but he was finally apprehended.

Mr. Speaker, this wasn't the first time that the criminal had targeted our men and women in uniform. A slew of previous convictions are on his rap sheet, including drug possession, evading arrest, and violence toward law enforcement. The killer is now where he belongs: in the jailhouse. The bandit will face Texas justice.

Texas Department of Public Safety Officer Allen was a devoted husband, a father of three, and a 15-year member of Texas law enforcement. He served with courage, placing the badge—the star—over his heart and reporting for duty every day.

We pray for Trooper Allen and his family. Trooper Allen, like all peace officers, placed his life between us and the lawless. We should remember him and thank God that such men have lived.

And that is just the way it is.

THE TAX REFORM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here for a Special Order. The issues of the day in Washington, D.C., are many. Tonight I would like to choose to talk about what is happening with the tax reform bill that is coming before the United States Senate. We are hearing rumors that it will be here this week, maybe a possible vote on Friday.

It is important for us, as we look at the first tax reform bill in 31 years, to understand that we do need changes to our Tax Code, that the Tax Code has become too complicated and too complex. It needs to be simplified. The Tax Code has become burdensome to small and medium-sized businesses. It is not always the most cooperative Tax Code for entrepreneurship or innovation. It lacks incentives for helping us in certain sectors of the economy to help us grow.

□ 1645

But the most staggering problem in the Tax Code today is that it has direct and substantial benefits for the wealthiest people in the country.

I am of the mindset that we need to have a Tax Code, an economy, and public policies that are going to allow the free enterprise system to work efficiently, that will allow for growth, especially in communities that have been distressed for many decades and are looking for the private sector to come in and hire our workers. It is very important.

Like most issues in the United States, like most issues that we face here in Congress, we have to look at these issues in the context of what is happening in the free market and what is happening in the rest of the economy.

So it is important for us to know that over the last 30 years, since the last time we have done tax reform, we have had a lot of growth in the country. Globalization and automation has led to enormous amounts of wealth being created, and that wealth has gotten concentrated. It has gotten concentrated into a small group of people in the country and it has gotten concentrated in certain areas of the country.