

FISCAL YEAR 2021 PROHIBITION ON
MINING IN THE RAINY RIVER
WATERSHED

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2020

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, last week the House Appropriations Committee passed the Fiscal Year 2021 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which I proudly authored as the Chair of the Subcommittee. This bill makes many critical investments in protecting our natural resources and contains several provisions designed to stop the Trump Administration from moving forward on disastrous environmental policies. Unfortunately, one of those provisions is being grossly mischaracterized by some of my colleagues across the aisle, and I claim this time to set the record straight.

I included language within the Interior Appropriations bill that prohibits funds from the bill, for the 2021 fiscal year only, from being spent on reviewing or approving a mine plan within the Rainy River Watershed in Minnesota's Superior National Forest.

First, let me be perfectly clear that this language does not impact the traditional taconite mining that takes place on Minnesota's Iron Range. Mines currently operating under an approved plan would not be affected by this language. Furthermore, there is no iron ore project with a mine plan under review within the entire Superior National Forest.

A search of the Federal Register and the Bureau of Land Management's National NEPA Register show that there is only one mine plan under review within the Rainy River Watershed: the Twin Metals sulfide-ore copper mine. This proposed mine would be on the doorstep of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), putting our nation's most visited wilderness at risk of toxic acid mine drainage.

Anyone suggesting that taconite mining in the iron range is at risk because of this language is either misinformed or misleading their constituents. I crafted this language for one purpose: to stop the Trump Administration from rushing through a deeply flawed plan for a toxic sulfide-ore mine before they are voted out of office this November.

Second, I want to emphasize again that this prohibition is for a single year of funding. Some of my colleagues have suggested that this prohibition would stop all future mine operations. That is simply untrue and suggests a misunderstanding of the way that federal appropriations bills work.

This language protects the BWCA until we are able to work with a more trustworthy administration next year. Multiple Trump Cabinet Members pledged during Congressional hearings to complete the mineral withdrawal study in this watershed. Instead, they abandoned the environmental review after 20 months and have refused to release its results. So clearly, the Trump administration cannot be trusted to review the plans for a mine that could devastate the Boundary Waters wilderness.

Third, some of my colleagues have claimed that stopping this mine plan from moving forward is depriving America of critical mineral resources. I can only assume that those colleagues are unaware of the fact that none of the minerals extracted at the Twin Metals

mine will stay in the United States. Twin Metals is wholly owned by the foreign mining conglomerate Antofagasta, who will ship the copper they extract overseas. Earlier this month, in fact, Reuters reported that for the second year in a row Antofagasta has signed contracts to send the copper they mine to China. The Twin Metals mine will not support U.S. national security interests. The copper will be gone, and all Minnesota will be left with is millions of tons of waste rock and acid drainage.

Finally, I want to address the claim that I somehow tried to "sneak" this language into my bill. Nothing could be further from the truth. I proudly highlighted this provision in my statements during our subcommittee and full committee markup. I have also repeatedly and publicly informed the Trump Administration during hearings in the Appropriations Committee that their refusal to release the results of the taxpayer-funded study examining the environmental impacts of sulfide-ore copper mining in the Rainy River Watershed was unacceptable, and that any mining plans should not proceed until the study results were released.

If I am trying to be sneaky about this provision, I am doing a very poor job, Madam Speaker.

The people of Minnesota and America deserve a president and representatives that operate with transparency, respect science, and follow our environmental laws. I have done my best to uphold those values in crafting my legislation, and I look forward to working with a new Administration that shares those values and can be trusted with our natural resources.

CELEBRATING NELL LONG'S 100TH
BIRTHDAY

HON. MO BROOKS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2020

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Nell Long on the occasion of her 100th birthday.

Nell Hill was born in Alabama's Oak Grove community on July 12, 1920. Her family settled in Alabama long before that. Nell grew up during the Great Depression, so she possesses a toughness and tenacity that only true hardship can produce. Nell worked hard to help her family as a girl. She harvested cotton with her father and preserved food with her mother. Nell went on to finish high school, most notably, in the light of an oil lamp—electricity did not come to Oak Grove until 1935.

At nineteen, Nell married James Long and started a family. They had three beautiful children. As an active mother, Nell volunteered as a substitute teacher, a 4-H Club leader, in the PTA, and on local campaigns. She worked in her children's school lunchroom. She did all this in addition to helping James on their farm. Nell and James were committed to conservation in Madison County and the fruits of their labor can still be seen in our community today. In 1986, Nell was named Madison County Woman of the Year for dedicated service in the community and church.

After James' passing, Nell has remained active in the community. She is a member of the local Homemaker's Club, Hunt Springs Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution

(DAR), and of Owens Cross Roads Church of Christ. She has inspired scores with her dedication to improving the lives of others.

Madam Speaker, the Tennessee Valley is fortunate to have such an exemplary citizen for 100 years. Nell Long's unwavering hard work, strong family values, and unshakable faith embody the best of our community.

I wish Nell and her entire family the very best as they celebrate Nell's centennial birthday.

HONORING FRANCIE COMBS IOWAN
OF THE WEEK

HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 2020

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating Mrs. Francine Combs for her decades of hard work in her community and her 100th birthday this month by naming her our Iowan of the Week.

Francine started working as a waitress when she was only 18. She worked at The Joy Ann, a restaurant of the northwest side of the square in Greenfield, Iowa whose local claim to fame was being the first eatery in town to have a juke box. From those first table at The Joy Ann, Francine's tenacity and dedication to her work and the community took off.

Over the course of her 65 years as a waitress; Francine worked at several other eateries—all the while raising four sons—John, Dan, David and Dennis—with her husband Frank.

Francine's son John Combs and his wife Phyllis recalled that, "Every restaurant there ever was in Greenfield, she was a waitress there." Diners and patrons in Greenfield came to know and love Francine as a staple of their community.

A significant portion of Francine's decades of waitressing were at the Maid-Rite Café—an Iowa community staple for nearly three generations and a venerated home to our famous loose meat sandwiches. In all her years, if Francine ever learned the secrets behind the Maid-Rite's incredible rendition of this classic Iowa sandwich, she still hasn't told.

In honoring Francine today, I want to underscore the values of hard work, attentiveness, and interpersonal skills that serving Iowa's hungry families teaches to everyone working in the hospitality industry. As a former waitress myself, I know how much I learned from the long hours on my feet and the diligent yet delicate work that is required of any food service professional—and I am so proud to recognize one who embodies that Iowa work ethic through decades of service to her thousands of patrons.

In 2004, Francine hung up her apron at the age of 84 for a well-earned retirement. And as she reaches another incredible milestone—100 years old this month—I can only imagine how she has seen the world change.

As we all know, the restaurant industry is evolving. From meal delivery services to contactless ordering through kiosks; some of the personal touches that Francine gave to her customers are becoming rarer. But it's my hope that as restaurants and other food services continue to weather this pandemic and