

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 978

To rescind Public Land Order 7917, to reinstate mineral leases and permits in the Superior National Forest, to ensure timely review of Mine Plans of Operations, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 5, 2025

Mr. STAUBER (for himself, Mr. FINSTAD, Mrs. FISCHBACH, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. TIFFANY, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. HUNT, Ms. MALOY, Ms. HAGEMAN, and Mr. GOSAR) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To rescind Public Land Order 7917, to reinstate mineral leases and permits in the Superior National Forest, to ensure timely review of Mine Plans of Operations, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Superior National For-
5 est Restoration Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN**
2 **MINNESOTA.**

3 (a) RESCISSION.—The order titled “Public Land
4 Order No. 7917 for Withdrawal of Federal Lands; Cook,
5 Lake, and Saint Louis Counties, MN”, issued by the Bu-
6 reau of Land Management and dated January 31, 2023,
7 is hereby rescinded.

8 (b) TIMELY REVIEW.—The Secretary shall complete
9 all necessary environmental and regulatory reviews, in-
10 cluding processes subject to the National Environmental
11 Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), for all Mine
12 Plans of Operations within the Superior National Forest
13 lands in the State of Minnesota—

14 (1) with respect to a Mine Plan of Operations
15 submitted or resubmitted in the 10-year period be-
16 ginning on the date of the enactment of this section,
17 not later than 18 months after the date on which
18 such Mine Plan of Operations is submitted or resub-
19 mitted; and

20 (2) with respect to a Mine Plan of Operations
21 reviewed pursuant to this section, all necessary sup-
22 plemental environmental and regulatory reviews
23 shall be reviewed by the Secretary not later than 6
24 months after the date on which such supplemental
25 Mine Plan of Operations is submitted, and all nec-
26 essary regulatory and environmental permits shall be

1 issued not later than 6 months after the Mine Plan
2 of Operations is approved.

3 (c) REISSUANCE OF MINERAL LEASES.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall issue
5 each mineral lease, preference right lease, and
6 prospecting permit canceled by the Secretary relat-
7 ing to lands within Superior National Forest during
8 the period beginning on January 31, 2021, and end-
9 ing on the date of the enactment of this section.
10 Such mineral leases, preference right leases, and
11 prospecting permits shall be reissued on the same
12 terms as were in effect on the date of such cancella-
13 tions, except that—

14 (A) prospecting permits shall be reissued
15 with their original terms and conditions as es-
16 tablished upon initial issuance; and

17 (B) all mineral leases and preference right
18 leases shall be modified to—

19 (i) an initial term of 20 years begin-
20 ning on the date of the enactment of this
21 section;

22 (ii) a nondiscretionary right to re-
23 newal for 5 subsequent 10-year terms; and

1 (iii) a right to make reasonable ad-
2 justments of the rental and royalty terms
3 at renewal.

4 (2) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—A lease or permit
5 issued under paragraph (1) is not subject to judicial
6 review.

7 (d) ISSUANCE OF NEW PREFERENCE RIGHT
8 LEASES.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
10 provision of law, not later than 5 days after the date
11 of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall
12 grant preference right leases for any preference
13 right lease applications that were rejected after Jan-
14 uary 31, 2021, and prior to the date of the enact-
15 ment of this section and have received a notice of
16 preliminary valuable deposit determination.

17 (2) LEASE TERMS.—Such preference right
18 leases shall be issued with terms consistent with sub-
19 section (c)(1).

20 (e) PERMITS FOR USE OF SURFACE LANDS.—With
21 respect to lands subject to a lease pursuant to subsection
22 (d), the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of
23 Agriculture, may issue permits for the use of surface lands
24 not included in the lease for purposes connected with, and

1 reasonably necessary to, the exploration, development, and
2 use of the deposits covered by the lease.

3 (f) SECRETARY DEFINED.—For the purposes of this
4 section, the term “Secretary” means—

5 (1) the Secretary of the Interior; or

6 (2) when used with respect to any unit of the
7 National Forest System, the Secretary of Agri-
8 culture.

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