



July 3, 2025

The Honorable Pete Stauber
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Stauber,

Center of the American Experiment is writing in support of the policies contained in H.R. 4090 to codify the mineral directives in President Trump's Executive Orders, which will help restore the U.S.' role as a mining powerhouse. Minnesota has an important role to play in modern domestic mining that can provide the many critical minerals we need for national defense, electronics, energy technology, and artificial intelligence.

Minnesota's mineral resources, like the copper-nickel-cobalt deposits in the Duluth complex, could make a meaningful difference in reducing our reliance on foreign sources of minerals. The Duluth complex is one of the world's largest undeveloped mineral deposits, containing 95 percent of the U.S.' nickel, 88 percent of the U.S.' cobalt, and 33 percent of the U.S.' copper. The state's stringent and comprehensive environmental protection programs have ensured that mining in Minnesota is safe and environmentally responsible.

The proposed Twin Metals Project was thoroughly derailed in January 2022 when the Biden-Harris administration cancelled two federal mineral leases and established a 20-year mining moratorium on over 225,000 acres in the Rainy River watershed in the Superior National Forest, which includes the lands where the Twin Metals minerals leases were located. H.R. 4090 Sec. 5 creates the statutory foundation for restoring the leases previously granted to Twin Metals and revoking this mineral withdrawal.

Accomplishing the mission of H.R. 4090 to "establish the position of the United States as the leading producer of hardrock minerals" will require reducing burdensome federal barriers to mining. The review required in H.R. 4090 Sec. 5 should consider substantially revising the mineral leasing regulations for acquired lands, like those in the Superior National Forest, which are significantly underexplored. Only 50,000 acres, or 0.08 percent, of the U.S.' 64 million acres of acquired lands are being explored and developed for minerals. The geologic mapping required in H.R. 4090 will help discover mineral deposits that are buried beneath unmineralized rocks. Increasing exploration of acquired lands could lead to mineral discoveries that could reduce U.S. reliance on foreign minerals.

Sec. 5 should also consider enshrining in statute several recent reforms to the lengthy and litigious permitting process, which will encourage mineral exploration and development. The National

Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) has morphed from a procedural analysis of environmental impacts into a mandate for agencies to select the most environmentally preferable outcome, regardless of whether that outcome is consistent with the agency's purpose and statutory obligations. The administration's Executive Order 14154 directing the Council on Environmental Quality to rescind its NEPA regulations, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado* make significant progress in restoring NEPA to its proper role. To provide durability, Congress should codify these recent NEPA administrative changes and judicial interpretations.

Codifying the provisions in the Trump administration's executive orders through H.R. 4090 would quell the regulatory whipsaw that discourages investment and strengthen private-sector financing for domestic mineral exploration and development projects. Center of the American Experiment applauds your efforts to restore sensible mining policy that will bring prosperity to Minnesota and reduce the country's dangerous reliance on foreign minerals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sarah Montalbano". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle name.

Sarah Montalbano

Energy and Environmental Policy Fellow

Center of the American Experiment