



July 10, 2017

The Honorable Rick Nolan
U.S. House of Representatives
2366 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

VIA Email: Will.Mitchell@mail.house.gov

RE: H.R. 3115, The Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017

Dear Congressman Nolan:

On behalf of MiningMinnesota, I am writing to strongly support H.R. 3115, The Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017.

MiningMinnesota is an industrial trade organization made up of all nonferrous exploration and mineral development companies in Minnesota, along with approximately 100 supplier and vendor businesses, all committed to sustainable and environmentally responsible copper-nickel and PGM mineral development and mining in Minnesota.

Enactment of this bipartisan legislation would bring expeditious and long-overdue closure to the land exchange, which already has stood up to an exhaustive environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act and Minnesota Environmental Policy Act. That review included intense public scrutiny and multiple opportunities for public comment and was subsequently approved by the State of Minnesota and the U.S. Forest Service.

The legislation simply ratifies the Forest Service's determination in its Record of Decision that the land exchange is in the public interest. Furthermore, it eliminates the risks that accompany litigation over PolyMet's right to mine on the land. Enactment of the bill would not permit or approve construction of the mining project. Mine development and operations remain subject to regulations and permits issued by state and federal agencies.

Beyond the procedural benefits that would come from the bill's enactment are the 6,690 acres of publicly accessible, private land that the Forest Service will obtain. These lands are ecologically rich for their lakes, wetlands, wild rice waters and dense forest. In return, PolyMet will receive Superior National Forest land that has virtually no public access and is surrounded by mining interests, but which will be an enabling force in moving the mining project forward. The project is estimated to create 1,000 jobs and generate \$515 million in annual economic benefit to the region.

I urge you and your colleagues to move this bill through the legislative process as quickly as possible, and to vote its passage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Ongaro". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frank Ongaro
Executive Director

CC: Senator Klobuchar
Senator Franken
Representative Peterson
Representative Emmer
Representative Lewis