

Dear Editor:

In March 2016, Governor Dayton issued a directive to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources not to authorize or enter into any new state access or lease agreements for mining operations on state land in the Superior National Forest in close proximity to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Further, the Governor contacted the Bureau of Land Management, urging that Twin Metals Minnesota's leases, currently under review, not be renewed. The Governor's actions were contrary to Minnesota law, the Minnesota Constitution and Public Law No. 49-495 that expressly permits mining in the Superior National Forest.

The Governor's actions were shamefully misguided. Directing the Minnesota DNR to deny access to state land in the Superior National Forest where mineral development is expressly permitted, and not issue new mineral exploration leases on thousands of acres of state land, including 95,000 acres of school trust land, was based neither upon facts nor science. Governor Dayton was inspired to act by environmental organizations that applied political pressure to pre-emptively quash a proposed mining project during the planning stage before the feasibility studies could even be completed.

The Governor's actions were not only unlawful, but profoundly irresponsible and thoughtless. Someone please inform the Governor that the median household income in the Cities of Hibbing, Virginia, Ely and Babbitt average less than 59% of that of the state as a whole. Twin Metals' proposed mining operation will create 650 new mining jobs and 1300 jobs in mining related industries. Governor Dayton continues to ignore the well-being of thousands of Northeastern Minnesotans. Many are under-employed because there are too few jobs available that pay a living wage, are forced to take a second job to support their families, and are stripped of their dignity and self-esteem.

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