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Up North Jobs Inc.

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April 21, 2015

U.S. Representative Rick Nolan  
2447 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Representatives:

Keith Ellison  
2244 Rayburn Bldg  
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Emmer  
503 Cannon House Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20515

John Kline  
2439 Rayburn House Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20515

Erik Paulsen  
127 Cannon House Office Bldg  
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Collin C. Peterson  
2109 Rayburn House Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20515

Timothy J. Walz  
1034 Longworth House Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Members of Congress:

We write in response to news media reports that Minnesota 4<sup>th</sup> District Congresswoman Betty McCollum has introduced a bill, H.R. 1796, *“that will withdraw federal lands in the Rainy River Drainage Basin from the federal mineral leasing program.”* “. . . [W]here federal mineral leases currently exist, my bill will require modern enforceable conditions on mining companies that protect both the environment and American taxpayers.”

Ely, Minnesota is ground zero for the radical environmentalists whose intent is to ban any development of new mining projects in the BWCA watershed and the Lake Superior region. The focus of H.R. 1796 is to prohibit the development of any new mining projects in the BWCA Watershed. One such environmental organization, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, is based in Ely. Former Faegre & Benson attorney Rebecca L. Rom serves on the Board of Directors of that organization. Ms. Rom, is the likely author of the McCollum Bill and the driving force behind this proposed legislation.

On the same day Congresswoman McCollum told her 4<sup>th</sup> District constituents that she would be introducing the aforementioned H. R. 1796, Ms. Rom, in Ely announced that she leads a nationwide movement to prohibit any mining, ferrous or non-ferrous, in the BWCA watershed. Presently there is only one contemplated copper-nickel mining project conducting studies to mine minerals in the BWCA watershed, that being Twin Metals Minnesota. To be clear, the Twin Metals project lies entirely outside of the BWCA boundaries and any buffer zones relating to the BWCA.

One can only conclude that Ms. Rom persuaded Representative McCollum to introduce legislation whose passage would pre-emptively cause Twin Metals Minnesota to suspend their ongoing environmental and engineering studies needed to obtain the necessary permits required to conduct mining operations.

I serve as the Chairman and Executive Director of Up North Jobs Inc., a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization based in Ely. We are a dues paying membership organization with nearly 1,000 members, with thousands of additional supporters living throughout the State of Minnesota. Our mission is to promote economic development and job growth in northeastern Minnesota.

Representative McCollum's bill and Ms. Rom's Campaign to ban mining in the BWCA watershed is a dagger directed at economic development and job growth in Northeastern Minnesota. It comes at a time when the ferrous mining companies have announced that 1,300 – 1,400 workers will soon be laid off as a result of a diminishing global demand for steel and imported steel product pressures on domestic producers. Even now the economy in northeastern Minnesota is stagnant and job growth is almost non-existent. Job growth in northeastern Minnesota lags behind all other larger populations and sectors of the State.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced in February 2015 that the Duluth-Superior area during the twelve months ending in February 2015 showed negative job growth, down -0.7% percent. All other larger population centers have had a year of employment increases, Mpls-St. Paul up 2%, Mankato up 1.9%, Rochester up 1.2% and St. Cloud up 1%. The figures announced by DEED for the Duluth-Superior area for the 12 months ending in March 2015 were not much better: job growth was up by only 0.3%.

Withdrawal of federal minerals from future leasing and development would have a long-lasting devastating impact on economic development and job growth in Northeastern Minnesota. Our schools would be the biggest losers with the loss of millions of dollars in revenues that would not be paid into the Minnesota Permanent School Trust Fund through mineral royalties.

We encourage our Minnesota Congressional delegation, both Democrats and Republicans to reject Representative McCollum's proposed legislation and her meddling in our 8<sup>th</sup> District economy. Economic development and job growth in northeastern Minnesota is not a Democrat nor a Republican issue; it is about workers, men and women, and their opportunity to live in a place of their choosing and earn a living wage to support their families. If Representative McCollum's bill becomes law, it will have the effect of denying Northeastern Minnesota residents the opportunity to hold a job that will support his/her family and strip that person of their dignity and self-esteem.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum and Becky Rom are seeking solutions to nonexistent problems to the detriment of Northeastern Minnesota residents. Congresswoman McCollum should stay at home and tend to the problems associated with the Mississippi and the St. Croix rivers which border the 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

Regards,

Gerald M. Tyler  
Chairman, Executive Director

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