

**Spencer Igo**  
**State Representative**

District 5B  
Itasca and Cass Counties



# **Minnesota**

## **House of**

## **Representatives**

To: U.S. Forest Service

Subject: Rainy River Withdrawal Application Draft EA Comment

On behalf of our communities across the state of Minnesota, our caucus opposes the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management recommending a withdrawal of lands and minerals in northeast Minnesota from future mineral leasing and potential development. The draft Environmental Assessment (EA) does not meet the rigor of the full Environmental Impact Statement and permitting processes that are required by law for proposed mining projects to thoroughly examine the details of any specific mine proposal. The EA also does not take into account any of the science or data from the Twin Metals Minnesota project proposal - submitted in 2019 - that took more than 10 years of hydro-geological and environmental studies, engineering, community engagement and design.

If enacted, the withdrawal will cause the state of Minnesota to lose thousands of potential jobs that would result from future mining projects, billions of dollars in future investment in northeast Minnesota, and billions in potential revenues from mining that support the people and more importantly every student in Minnesota's School Trust Lands.

The targeted federal lands are in an area of historic mining activity where mining is currently allowed and encouraged by federal and state law. The proposed withdrawal would provide no additional environmental protections than those that currently exist under state and federal law.

The Environmental Assessment is acting on a false presumption that any mining will pollute the Rainy River Watershed, basing these assumptions on studies with no credibility or applicability to the region. The only way to properly assess whether mining can occur safely is by thoroughly reviewing specific project proposals, as the nature of a project's geology, environmental, and socioeconomic factors vary widely depending on where the project is located and its design. This clearly pre-determined draft EA does not evaluate all the data available to determine if mining can be done safely.

The proposed withdrawal will also shut out a significant domestic source of critical minerals needed to diversify our energy grid – minerals where the U.S. is currently reliant on unpredictable and unstable foreign sources.

We urge the U.S. Forest Service reject this draft EA and its devastating impact on the future well-being of Minnesota citizens and communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Spencer Igo", written in a cursive style.

Representative Spencer Igo



**Minority Leader Kurt Daudt**



**Deputy Minority Leader Anne Neu Brindley**



**School Trust Land's Chair Representative  
Tim O'Driscoll**



**Representative Tony Albright**



**Representative Paul Anderson**



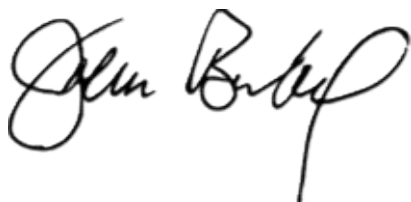
**Representative Jeff Backer**



**Representative Peggy Bennett**



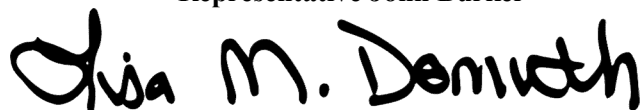
**Representative Matt Bliss**



**Representative John Burkel**



**Representative Brian Daniels**



**Representative Lisa Demuth**



**Representative Bob Dettmer**



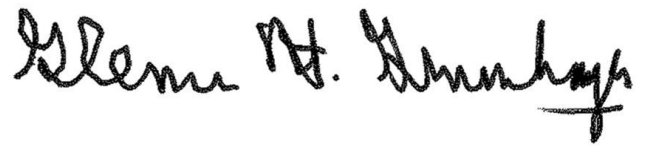
**Representative Sondra Erickson**



**Representative Steve Green**



**Representative Matt Grossell**



**Representative Glenn Gruenhagen**



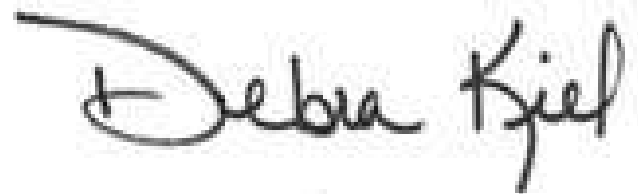
**Representative Rod Hamilton**



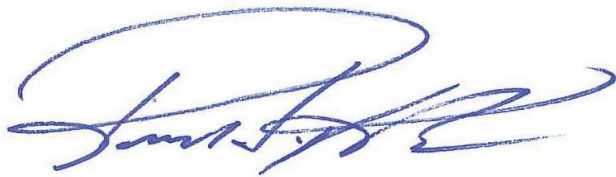
**Representative Josh Heintzeman**



**Representative Brian Johnson**



**Representative Deb Kiel**



**Representative Ron Kresha**



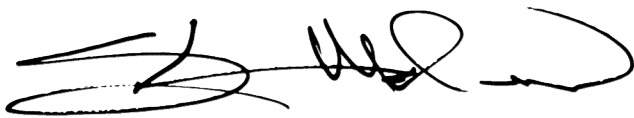
**Representative Eric Lucero**



**Representative Dale Lueck**



**Representative Joe McDonald**



**Representative Shane Mekeland**



**Representative Patricia Mueller**



**Representative Jim Nash**



**Representative Nathan Nelson**



**Representative Paul Novotny**



**Representative John Poston**



**Representative Donald Raleigh**



**Representative Peggy Scott**



**Representative Chris Swedzinski**



**Representative Tama Theis**



**Representative Paul Torkelson**



**Representative Dean Urdahl**