



Rep. Tom Emmer on Emmer Fights to Protect Minnesotans Right to Responsibly Mine

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****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Mr. Speaker, I want to echo the concerns of my colleague and friend, Mr. Stauber, over the rejection of our reasonable amendment to this bill in Rules Committee. In their very last days, the Obama administration ordered federal control over Minnesota land in the form of a mineral withdrawal proposal. We were told it was a step to protect the environment, when in reality it was nothing more than Washington telling Minnesotans that they can't be responsible for their own land and resources. Blocking exploration and potential development has devastated the region, and that's exactly what this bill will continue to do today if it passes. I introduced the Miner Act two years ago to restore the rights and responsibilities back to Minnesotans as stewards of our lands. The House passed our bill last year, closely followed by action from this administration, to restore our rights. Yet bureaucrats from Washington are at it again, this time including a provision in this bill to create the quote study that is yet another barrier, another delay tactic outside of the normal regulatory review process. The amendment I offered with Mr. Stauber would address this and simply allow the process to move forward. Let us be clear, any proposed mine in the area would still need to go through a long and thoroughly detailed review through the National Environmental Policy Act and other regulatory processes. Leaseholders would be allowed to propose a mine plan of operation and demonstrate how they will protect the environment in the surrounding area. And if that plan does not meet our high standards that our state and country require, it will be rejected. Yet I am disappointed by some of my Minnesota colleagues who do not have faith in the people of our great state. They don't have faith that our people would want to protect our own land while ensuring development and a better future for our children. My colleagues don't want to entertain potential for thousands of high-paying labor negotiated jobs for northern Minnesota and the surrounding region. These same men and women, these miners, are Minnesotans first. We are proud of our state's natural beauty, and we are experts when it comes to how to preserve it. I believe my state is perfectly capable of abiding by the existing rules and regulations and determining the best way to use our land. Mr. Speaker, I oppose the rule and urge my colleagues to do so as well. I yield back.

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