



## **FACTS: TWIN METALS MINNESOTA'S FEDERAL MINERAL PREFERENCE RIGHT LEASES MNES 1352 & 1353**

**DECEMBER 15, 2016**

Since 2013, Twin Metals Minnesota has been seeking U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approval for renewal of two 50-year federal mineral Preference Right Leases – MNES-1352 and MNES 1353 – which are a major component of Twin Metals' proposed underground copper-nickel mining project being developed in northeastern Minnesota. Twin Metals has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in these leased lands, and the company believes it has a right under federal law to renewal of the leases.

However, on December 15, 2016, the BLM reversed five decades of support for the leases and announced a decision to deny Twin Metals' application for lease renewal. If allowed to stand, the BLM decision will have a devastating impact on the future economy of the Iron Range and all of Northeast Minnesota, eliminating the promise potential mining projects offer generations of Minnesotans in terms of thousands of good-paying jobs, billions of dollars in investment in the region, and billions more in revenues to Minnesota schools through the state School Trust Fund. In September 2016, Twin Metals filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Minnesota challenging the BLM's authority to deny renewal of the leases.

Below are key facts related to Twin Metals' (TMM) federal mineral leases:

- TMM's federal mineral leases - MNES 1352 and MNES 1353 - have been in effect for more than 50 years.
- TMM's leases are located south of Ely and north of Babbitt, MN, in an area of the Superior National Forest where mining is allowed and encouraged under state and federal law, and where mining activity is identified as a "Desired Condition" under the 2004 Superior Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The TMM leases fall outside of the protected areas of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the federal Mining Protection Area.
- The BLM issued the leases in 1966 for an initial term of 20 years and granted the lessee the right to successive 10-year renewals. BLM previously renewed the leases on two occasions (1989 and 2004) with the consultation and endorsement of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).
- Renewal of Twin Metals' leases is consistent with the USFS' own guidance found in the 2004 Superior National Forest (SNF) Land and Resource Management Plan, which identifies mining within the SNF to be a "Desired Condition."
- The previous two lease renewals have not resulted in any adverse environmental impacts, and BLM has conducted appropriate NEPA review on all proposals for activities on the lease lands.
- Before mining can occur on the leased lands, BLM must approve a federal Mine Plan of Operation (MPO), which can only be issued after completion of a joint federal-state EIS under NEPA. In addition, mining requires completion of the federal and state environmental permitting processes, including a Minnesota permit to mine and other federal and state permits.

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**About Twin Metals Minnesota:** Twin Metals Minnesota is a Minnesota company focused on developing and operating an underground copper, nickel, platinum, palladium, gold and silver mining project (TMM Project) in the Iron Range region of Northeast Minnesota. Twin Metals is owned by Antofagasta plc, one of the top ten copper producers in the world. The TMM Project is in the early stages of development and offers Minnesota an extraordinary opportunity for long-term, environmentally-sound economic growth and job creation.