



**Range Association of
Municipalities and Schools**
5525 Emerald Avenue
Mt. Iron, MN 55768

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RAMS OPPOSES GOV. WALZ ACTION TO BLOCK MINING IN RAINY RIVER WATERSHED

Mountain Iron, MN – The Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) strongly opposes Governor Tim Walz’s action to block future mining development in the Rainy River Watershed.

For years, Northeastern Minnesotans have been told that proposed mining projects should be judged on the science, follow Minnesota's laws and regulations, and undergo the state's rigorous environmental review and permitting processes. Now, rather than allowing that process to work, the Governor is directing state agencies to step away from the table before proposed projects can be fully evaluated on their merits.

That is not letting the process work. It is changing the rules because the Governor does not like the potential outcome.

The decision is particularly frustrating for communities represented by RAMS. It comes on the heels of the Governor's decision not to call a special legislative session to address the significant economic losses caused by this summer's wildfires, which devastated portions of the region's tourism economy and left some businesses reporting losses approaching 40 percent of their annual revenue.

For decades, Iron Range communities have been told that we need to diversify our economy. Yet when new economic development opportunities emerge, projects that could create good-paying jobs, expand our tax base, strengthen our schools and communities, and produce minerals our nation needs, we are told those projects should not even be given the opportunity to complete the regulatory process.

RAMS is not asking Minnesota to abandon environmental protections or approve projects that cannot meet the state's standards. We are asking the State of Minnesota to follow its





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own rules, rely on science, and allow projects to be evaluated through the environmental review and permitting processes already established in law.

Minnesota has some of the strongest environmental protections and most rigorous permitting requirements in the nation. If a project cannot meet those standards, it should not be permitted. But if it can, political intervention should not prevent it from moving forward.

The cities, townships, and school districts of the Iron Range have supported, and been supported by, responsible mining for generations. Our communities deserve a fair process, consistent rules, and a state government willing to give Northeastern Minnesota the same opportunity for economic growth that it expects us to create.

Changing the rules before the process is complete is not environmental review. It is a predetermined political decision, and RAMS strongly opposes it.

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Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) The organization represents more than 155,000 residents and over 70 public sector units of government, including 27 cities, 33 townships, and 15 public school districts in the 13,000 square mile Taconite Assistance Area (TAA) of northeast Minnesota. As an organization, RAMS has represented the interests of the Iron Range region for over 85 years.

