



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

AUG 24, 2017

Mr. Rich Sve
Commissioner
Lake County
Northern Counties Land Use Coordinating Board
3648 Highway 61
Two Harbors, Minnesota 55616

Dear Commissioner Sve:

Thank you for your letter of July 25, 2017, to U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, regarding the proposed withdrawal of 234,328 acres of Federal mineral estate from leasing, exploration, and development within the Superior National Forest. Secretary Perdue has asked me to respond. We apologize for the delayed response.

Request for public comment regarding the proposed 20-year withdrawal of Federal minerals from National Forest System lands on the Superior National Forest, within the Rainy River watershed, began on January 13, 2017. The public comment period was extended until August 17, 2017. In addition, the Forest Service held a public meeting in Duluth, Minnesota on March 26, 2017, in St. Paul, Minnesota on July 18, 2017, and in Virginia, Minnesota on July 25, 2017, to solicit additional public input.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans on reviewing all pending withdrawal applications to ensure that such actions are consistent with our National priorities. USDA will assess the comments developed through this public process to assist us in the review of this withdrawal.

We appreciate your concern and interest in this issue. If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief for National Forest System, Forest Service at (202) 205-1523.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. Jiron", written over the word "Sincerely,".

DANIEL J. JIRON
Acting Deputy Under Secretary
Natural Resources and Environment