



NATIONAL STONE, SAND
& GRAVEL ASSOCIATION

May 20, 2022

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman:

On behalf of the over 400-members of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA), I am writing to share our concern with H.R. 2794, the Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection and Pollution Prevention Act. This legislation would add unnecessary restrictions to mining activities over a large area of Northern Minnesota, impacting the ability to develop critical infrastructure and putting a crucial economic sector at risk that supplies high-paying jobs across rural communities.

NSSGA represents aggregate producers and those who manufacture equipment and services that support the construction industry. Our members are essential to the work of this country, and we represent more than 90 percent of the crushed stone and 70 percent of the sand and gravel consumed annually in the United States. Our members employ more than 100,000 hard-working men and women and are responsible for the essential raw materials found in every home, building, road, bridge, and public works project.

The men and women who work in the aggregates industry take pride in producing essential construction materials, while also ensuring there are minimal impacts on the surrounding communities' environment. They do this, not because of the plethora of local and federal air, water, and other environmental permits and regulations, but because they too are members of the community. They raise families, conduct business, and enjoy the outdoors. That is why the aggregates industry goes above and beyond to ensure it has done everything possible to be good neighbors that responsibly produce stone, sand, and gravel.

Further, because of the inherent nature of aggregates mining, there are negligible impacts on areas outside of the immediate quarry. During the removal, crushing, and processing of aggregates, no chemical compounds are added or discharged. The air is not impacted outside of the immediate facility, and operators take many proactive steps to mitigate dust exposure



on site. There have been no scientifically proven impacts on water quality in aquifers, lakes, rivers, and streams surrounding aggregates facilities. Often, operators recycle stormwater onsite and use it during their operations – limiting their reliance on local water sources.

It should also be noted that over the lifespan of a mining operation, aggregates operators will develop unused and reclaimed land to provide other beneficial uses that support critical habitats, promote water quality by creating new wetlands and drive biodiversity. NSSGA members routinely win awards for their work to improve their lands to promote environmental stewardship that supports the needs of the local communities.

That is why NSSGA members are concerned with the legislation, as it would add additional regulatory hurdles to the production of stone, sand, and gravel in northern Minnesota. If enacted, H.R. 2794 would diminish the ability of rural communities in this area to access critical resources that are necessary for building roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, homes, and businesses. Adding more prohibitions to local producers would significantly impact the cost of public works projects due to the necessity for stone, sand, and gravel to be imported into the area.

As an association, we believe that unnecessarily curtailing aggregates production will also strain federal funding utilized for infrastructure projects on lands and parks that require upgrade and repair in Northern Minnesota. While it is clear H.R. 2794 will limit economic opportunities for the people of Minnesota, it will also have significant environmental impacts. Eliminating access to the materials needed to develop new water projects and cleaner energy sources will have real environmental impacts on establishing cleaner air and water.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of our concerns with this legislation. Thank you for the important work you do in the Committee and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Johnson', is placed within a white rectangular box.

Michael W. Johnson
President and CEO
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association

