



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: GLEN BOLGER/ROBERT BLIZZARD

RE: KEY FINDINGS – STATEWIDE SURVEY IN MINNESOTA

DATE: APRIL 30, 2018

Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies is pleased to present the key findings of a statewide survey in Minnesota. The survey was conducted April 3-5, 2018 among five hundred registered voters statewide, and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.38\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases. Two hundred (200) of the interviews were conducted with cell phone respondents.

Key Findings

1. *A plurality of voters support building new copper-nickel mines in Northeast Minnesota.*

By 44% support/38% oppose, a plurality back building new copper-nickel mines in Northeast Minnesota.

2. *Message testing both sides on copper-nickel mining shows that majorities believe it should be allowed to go forward if federal and state laws/standards are met.*

In each of the following questions, the pro and con messages were rotated. All three of these underscore support for copper-nickel mining, provided standards are met.

Please tell me which statement comes closest to your own opinion:

70% Potential copper-nickel mining proposals in Minnesota should be allowed to go through the rigorous state and federal environmental review process and granted permits if environmental protection standards are met.

...Or...

26% Potential copper-nickel mining projects are so inherently harmful and risky to the environment that such projects should be prohibited before being proposed.

54% Potential copper-nickel mining projects should continue to be allowed within the boundaries of the Superior National Forest but outside of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area if those projects meet all state and federal environmental laws and regulations.

...or...

43% Potential copper-nickel mining projects are so risky that they should be prohibited within the boundaries of the Superior National Forest.

77% Potential copper-nickel mining projects should be allowed to be proposed and then thoroughly reviewed by state and federal agencies in accordance with state and federal laws.

...or...

21% Federal agencies should take action to ban all copper-nickel mining in Minnesota, even if existing federal law allows and encourages such mining.

3. *Having the imprimatur of the University of Minnesota-Duluth's estimates on jobs and investment increases support for copper-nickel mining.*

A majority of Minnesotans support allowing mining companies to explore and develop the copper-nickel deposit in northeast Minnesota by a 56%-38% margin once they learn an academic source estimates thousands of jobs and billions in investment.

Respondents were asked:

“The copper-nickel deposit in northeast Minnesota is one of the largest undeveloped resources in the world. There are a number of projects in line to explore and potentially mine these minerals. The University of Minnesota-Duluth estimates these projects could generate thousands of jobs and billions in investment. Now that you have heard more information, do you support or oppose allowing mining companies to explore and develop these minerals?”

4. *Minnesotans trust state and federal environmental agencies regarding the safety and responsibility of mining.*

Asked to agree or disagree with the following statement:

“I trust state and federal environmental agencies to ensure that mining is done safely and responsibly,”

Fully 64% of voters agree, while 36% disagree.

5. *Minnesotans do not want to withdraw federally-owned minerals located in Northeastern Minnesota from potential future mining activity.*

Only 40% support, while 44% oppose “a proposal to withdraw more than 230,000 acres of federally-owned minerals located in Northeastern Minnesota from potential future mining activity.”

The numbers are similar in the 8th Congressional District of Minnesota, as 41% support and 46% oppose withdrawal.

The Bottom Line

Minnesotans support additional copper-nickel mining in the northeastern part of the state. Support grows provided the proposed mines are able to go through the rigorous environmental review process, meet all state and federal environmental laws and regulations, and are thoroughly reviewed by state and federal agencies.