

Brian Hansmann

My name is Brian Hansmann, and I live and work on the Iron Range, specifically at Keetac. I came here for a career in mining, and today I am proud to serve not only as a miner, but also as a volunteer firefighter and first responder. Like so many of my neighbor's, I don't just work here- this is where I raised my family, where we live, play and build our future.

I am the first-generation steelworker with Local 2660, and together with my brother, we bring more than 15 years of combined experience in taconite mining. In my decade in the industry, I have seen firsthand just how vital mining is- not only to the Iron Range, but to the entire state of Minnesota and well beyond.

Mining is the financial backbone of Northeastern Minnesota:

- *More than 10,000 jobs are directly tied to mining operations.

- *The industry provides family- sustaining wages that often support the entire households on a single income.

- *Mining contributes hundreds of millions of dollars each year in production taxes, utility fees, and contracts with local vendors that keep our communities strong.

This is not an industry done for us- it is done for us. We are not victims of mining, we are its beneficiaries. And the benefits extend far beyond our borders: more than 11 million people nationwide are connected to steel making and manufacturing that depends on Iron Range taconite.

Some argue that mining harms wild rice, but this is not supported by fact. rice beds have always risen and fallen due to natural cycles- weather extremes, fluctuating water levels, and wildlife. Northeastern Minnesota known for the cleanest water in the state. modern mining is highly regulated, held to strict environmental standards, and backed by serious reclamation and stewardship efforts. We are not faceless corporations- we are your neighbors, with families, children in local schools and deep roots in this land.

This is why I strongly support granting Keetac the variance it needs to continue operations. We must work together to set standards that are realistic, sustainable, and supportive of all citizens. At the same time, we should continue to study wild rice beds and advance restoration efforts to truly strengthen the environment without scapegoating mining.

For the good of the Iron Range, our state, and our nation, I respectfully urge you to grant this variance.

Sincerely,
Brian Hansmann