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CONTACT: June Breneman, public relations manager, 218-788-2600

Governor Dayton approves $2.6M for UMD's Natural Resources Research Institute

DULUTH, Minn. – The Supplemental Budget approved by Governor Mark Dayton Wednesday included $2.6 million for the Natural Resources Research Institute at the University of Minnesota Duluth. The applied research organization requested $3.6 million to develop advanced technologies to improve the long-term viability of Minnesota's mining industry.

The “Mining Innovation Minnesota” request is aimed at improving iron ore yields, developing new technologies for high value mining products and complete a portfolio of mining opportunities for Minnesota. The funds will also survey technologies to reduce sulfate water contamination across Minnesota and minimize environmental impacts.

"The need for Minnesota taconite is shrinking due to a shift in steel making to using higher value metallic products," explained Rolf Weberg, NRRI executive director. "Our research will define environmentally responsible strategies to pursue higher value products and other opportunities."

Under the umbrella of the University of Minnesota system, NRRI will establish and utilize a robust coordination framework with state agencies, the mining industry and state stakeholders to conduct research and communicate peer-reviewed results. The sulfate reduction program, which has received a lot of public attention, will include a vetted portfolio of new and emerging remediation technologies.

“We are thankful to the Minnesota legislators and the governor for their bipartisan support,” said Weberg. “This will extend our 30 years of experience in understanding and developing the state’s natural resources and address the future of Minnesota’s resource opportunities.”

NRRI's mission is to deliver research solutions to balance Minnesota's economy, environment and resources for resilient communities.

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