

RICHARD M. NOLAN
8TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA



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WASHINGTON OFFICE
2366 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6211

NOLAN.HOUSE.GOV
FACEBOOK.COM/USREPRICKNOLAN
TWITTER.COM/USREPRICKNOLAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

February 10, 2016

The Hon. Kurt Daudt
Speaker, Minnesota House of Representatives
Minnesota State Capitol
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Re: Unemployment Compensation Extension for Iron Range Miners

Dear Speaker Daudt,

With the possibility of a special session now apparently off the table, I'm writing to urge you to join forces with Governor Dayton and Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk to extend urgently needed unemployment assistance for hundreds of Iron Range miners out of work due to the illegal dumping of millions of tons of low grade, foreign government-subsidized steel – and to do so on Day One of the new legislative session.

As I know you are aware, over the three months since Governor Dayton urged you and Senator Bakk to hold a special session focused on Iron Range unemployment assistance, the situation has gone from bad to worse. Collectively, we all heard the grim stories when we met with White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough in December. Today, nearly 2,000 miners are out of work, along with an estimated 1,400 others whose livelihoods depend on our iron ore and taconite industry. Grocery stores and other small businesses have closed or cut back on their operations. Food shelves are experiencing critical shortages. The United Way in northeastern Minnesota is projecting hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost contributions just as their support for services is needed most.

The good news is that there are a number of important efforts underway through the Congress, the White House and the International Trade Commission (ITC) that we believe will be successful in curbing the flow of illegal foreign steel imports and turning this dire situation on the Range around. Because our iron ore mining and steel industries are so vital to our economy and national security, we've already won 157 cases to impose stiff tariffs and duties on illegal steel dumping in the United States. Additionally, we have a number of efforts underway to expedite the findings process for the Department of Commerce and the ITC and strengthen enforcement. Those measures should start to produce some positive results over the next year.

But in the meantime, our steel workers have mortgages and auto loans to pay, groceries to buy and kids in school. That's what unemployment compensation benefits are for – to help workers and industries make it through these difficult periods of transition. We all value our Minnesota tradition of putting aside politics to help people who are in need through no fault of their own. I fervently hope you will exercise your leadership to help get this 26-week extension done for the people of Minnesota's Iron Range.

DULUTH OFFICE
11 EAST SUPERIOR STREET, SUITE 125
DULUTH, MN 55802
PHONE: (218) 464-6095

BRAINERD OFFICE
501 LAUREL STREET
BRAINERD, MN 56401
PHONE: (218) 454-4078

CENTER CITY OFFICE
313 N MAIN ST, ROOM 174
CENTER CITY, MN 55012
PHONE: (218) 491-3131

CHISHOLM OFFICE
316 WEST LAKE STREET #7
CHISHOLM, MN 55719
PHONE: (218) 491-3114

The Honorable Kurt Daudt
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Please know I stand ready to be of assistance in any way possible to further that important effort, and thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Nolan", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress