



**Range Association of
Municipalities and Schools**

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February 17, 2026

Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
The Honorable Dave Baker & The Honorable Dave Pinto, Co-Chairs Minnesota House of Representatives
Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN

Re: RAMS Support for House File 3393 – Iron Ore Mining Additional Unemployment Benefits

Dear Co-Chair Baker, Co-Chair Pinto & Committee Members:

On behalf of the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS), we write in strong support of House File 3393, providing additional unemployment benefits for iron ore mining employees and related workers impacted by recent workforce reductions.

Minnesota's Iron Range communities are uniquely dependent upon the stability of the iron mining industry. When large-scale layoffs occur, the economic impacts are immediate and deeply felt across our cities, townships, and school districts. These impacts extend well beyond the individual employee to local businesses, municipal services, and public education systems that rely heavily on stable employment and local spending.

House File 3393 provides a targeted, time-limited safety net for workers laid off between January 15 and March 15, 2026. By allowing eligible workers who have exhausted their regular unemployment benefits to access up to 26 additional weeks of support, this legislation helps stabilize families and local economies during a period of significant disruption.

Importantly, the bill recognizes the cyclical and global nature of the iron mining industry while ensuring that benefits are carefully structured and do not unfairly impact most employers' future unemployment tax rates. This balanced approach supports workers while acknowledging broader economic realities.

For Iron Range communities, this legislation is not simply about unemployment benefits, it is about preserving housing stability, maintaining school enrollment, protecting municipal tax bases, and sustaining the economic backbone of northeastern Minnesota during a difficult transition period.

RAMS appreciates your leadership in advancing House File 3393 and respectfully urges its passage. Thank you for your continued commitment to the Iron Range and the communities that power Minnesota's mining economy.

Sincerely,

Paul Peltier
Executive Director
Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS)

Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) The organization represents more than 155,000 residents and over 70 public sector units of government, including 27 cities, 33 townships, and 15 public school districts in the 13,000 square mile Taconite Assistance Area (TAA) of northeast Minnesota. As an organization, RAMS has represented the interests of the Iron Range region for 85 years.

