

Landwehr Confirmation as DNR Commissioner Advances

By John A. Knapp on January 25, 2012

The Minnesota Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee met yesterday to unanimously recommend confirmation of Tom Landwehr as Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissioner. The confirmation now goes to the full Senate. Commissioner Landwehr introduced himself, told the Committee about his background, and outlined his plans and priorities for the DNR. Landwehr, originally from Mankato, said “I love every corner of Minnesota” and expressed his desire to keep Minnesota’s natural resources around for his kids and future generations.

Landwehr’s priorities will be in step with Governor Dayton’s priorities of job creation, a government that works for Minnesotans, and an efficient State government. He described his role as Commissioner as the Chief Steward of natural resources for the State of Minnesota.

Landwehr told the Committee that there has been a downturn in the forest products industry and that it is critical to retain the industries that rely on Minnesota’s forests. A healthy forest industry will be a top priority for the DNR.

In response to questions from the Committee, Landwehr addressed extended rotation forestry, recodification of Minnesota’s timber laws, improving the DNR’s relationship with the forest products industry and offering more State timber for sale.

Landwehr did not mention the mining industry in his initial comments but Committee Chair Bill Ingebrigtsen asked where he stood on mining issues. Landwehr said that the Governor has created a Mining Sub-Cabinet to address mining issues. Its purpose is to create an environment welcoming to mining. Minnesotans have accepted iron mining as an economic driver in northeast Minnesota and should be open to non-ferrous mining as well.

Landwehr said that because Governor Dayton’s priority is job creation, he is obligated to support mining. Mining has the potential of creating upwards of 10,000 new jobs in the State. According to Landwehr, “We don’t want to pass up mining opportunities.”