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Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. Announces Anticipated Production Curtailment at Empire Mine in 2012

2012 U.S. Iron Ore sales volume expectation maintained at 23 million tons

CLEVELAND, Dec. 5, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. (NYSE: CLF) (Paris: CLF) announced today that it anticipates full-year 2012 production volume at the Company's Empire mine in Michigan to be approximately 2.7 million tons, down from 2011's full year expected production volume of approximately 4.6 million tons. The decrease is the result of planned blast furnace maintenance in 2012 at one of Cliffs' North American customer's facilities. This curtailment is not expected to impact the Company's previously announced sales and production volumes in its U.S. Iron Ore business segment.

(Logo: https://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20101104/CLIFFSLOGO)

Cliffs indicated the planned production curtailment may affect approximately 600 of the Company's Michigan operations employees, beginning in the second quarter of 2012. Terrence Mee, Cliffs' senior vice president, global iron ore and metallic sales, said: "While the announcement of this production curtailment at Empire Mine will impact our Michigan Operations, we believe the curtailment will be temporary. We will continue to prudently manage our global production base as we work with customers to supply their blast furnace raw material requirements."

Cliffs indicated that 2012 production volumes within the Company's other four U.S. Iron Ore mines will not be impacted by the customer's planned blast furnace maintenance outage in 2012. However, production volumes are subject to change throughout the year based on customer demand. In addition, Cliffs is maintaining its full-year 2012 expected sales and production volumes of 23 million tons for its U.S. Iron Ore business segment.

About Cliffs Natural Resources Inc.
Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. is an international mining and natural resources company. A member of the S&P 500 Index, the Company is a major global iron ore producer and a significant producer of high- and low-volatile metallurgical coal. Cliffs' strategy is to continually achieve greater scale and diversification in the mining industry through a focus on serving the world's largest and fastest growing steel markets. Driven by the core values of social, environmental and capital stewardship, Cliffs associates across the globe endeavor to provide all stakeholders operating and financial transparency.

The Company is organized through a global commercial group responsible for sales and delivery of Cliffs products and a global operations group responsible for the production of the minerals the Company markets. Cliffs operates iron ore and coal mines in North America and two iron ore mining complexes in Western Australia. The Company also has a 45%

economic interest in a coking and thermal coal mine in Queensland, Australia. In addition, Cliffs has a major chromite project, in the pre-feasibility stage of development, located in Ontario, Canada.

News releases and other information on the Company are available on the Internet at: http://www.cliffsnaturalresources.com

'*Safe Harbor' Statement under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995*
This release contains "forward-looking" statements within the safe harbor protections of the federal securities laws. Although the Company believes that its forward-looking statements are based on reasonable assumptions, such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties relating to Cliffs' operations and business environment that are difficult to predict and may be beyond Cliffs' control. Such uncertainties and factors may cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by forward-looking statements for a variety of reasons including: the uncertainty or weakness in global economic and/or market conditions; trends affecting our financial condition, results of operations or future prospects, particularly any slowing of the economic growth rate in China for an extended period of time; Cliffs' ability to achieve the synergies and the strategic and other objectives related to the acquisition of Consolidated Thompson; the outcome of any contractual disputes with our customers or significant suppliers of energy, materials or services; our ability to successfully complete the repair and refurbishment work at the Oak Grove Mine in the expected time frame; the amount and timing of any insurance recovery proceeds with respect to Oak Grove Mine; the impact of price-adjustment factors on our sales contracts; availability of capital equipment and component parts; the failure of plant, equipment or processes to operate as anticipated; unanticipated downturns in business relationships with customers or their purchases from us; events or circumstances that could impair or adversely impact the viability of a mine and the carrying value of associated assets; unexpected claims, charges, litigation or dispute resolutions; the impact of acquisitions and divestitures; unanticipated difficulties integrating acquisitions; our ability to obtain any permits, approvals, modifications or other authorization of, or from, any governmental or regulatory entity; new laws and governmental regulations; the ability to achieve planned production rates or levels; our actual economic ore reserves; reductions in current resource estimates; the ability to maintain adequate liquidity and successfully implement our financing plans; and problems or uncertainties with productivity, third-party contractors, labor disputes, weather conditions, natural disasters, tons mined, changes in cost factors, the supply or price of energy, transportation, mine-closure obligations and employee benefit costs and other risks of the mining industry; and other factors and risks that are set forth in the Company's most recently filed reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The information contained herein speaks as of the date of this release and may be superseded by subsequent events. Except as may be required by applicable securities laws, we do not undertake any obligation to revise or update any forward-looking statements contained in this release.

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