From: madisonragland@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Madison Ragland
To: Lands, BLM_ES
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Superior National Forest Withdrawal Application
Date: Saturday, December 18, 2021 8:12:06 AM

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Dear State Director of Geospatial Services F. David Radford,

Dear Bureau of Land Management ("BLM"),

As a Wildlife Biologist that has traveled the country, I find the threat to this pristine, sensitive habitat to be abhorrent. In my years I have learned there are very few habitats that remain clean and largely untouched by man, but the Boundary Waters are one of them. This planet and it's ecosystems are our home and now partly your responsibility. We cannot keep unsustainably taking from our ecosystems without consequences. On a small scale, the Boundary Waters are an important recreation area. On a larger scale, it is one of the most pristine watersheds in the United States. While I am not and economist, I do know that it is safe to say that profits from Boundary Waters recreation will see serious decline in years following mining. From a scientists standpoint, mining in this area would be the wrong decision. If you allow mining in this area, you will be responsible for the collapse of this ecosystem's food web, decrease in recreation profits, and for completely destroying the water quality of a once rare, beautiful habitat. But go ahead, make a quick profit by destroying yet another habitat; the consequences await your children and grandchildren.

Therefore:

I strongly support protecting the watershed of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness ("Boundary Waters"). The threats posed by sulfide-ore copper mining are unjustifiable in the watershed of such a sensitive and important area.

The Boundary Waters is America's most popular and water-rich Wilderness Area. Its 1.1 million acres contain more than 1,000 pristine lakes and 1,200 miles of river and stream, offering unmatched fishing, hunting, and other public lands wilderness recreational opportunities for all Americans to enjoy. Priceless and irreplaceable, the Boundary Waters must not be put at risk of perpetual pollution from the most toxic industry in America.

During environmental review of the proposed withdrawal, please be sure to thoroughly address the following:

· Cleanest water quality in North America - The lakes, rivers, and streams of the Boundary Waters watershed are among the cleanest waters in North America and are especially sensitive to acids and heavy-metals found in copper mine pollution;

·America's most visited & accessible wilderness destination - The Boundary Waters is the most popular Wilderness Area in the U.S., and the largest east of the Rockies and north of the Everglades. Visitors travel through it by boat or canoe, and can choose routes to avoid having to carry their gear, making the Boundary Waters more accessible to families, children, and people with physical limitations; and

· Economics - The Boundary Waters supports a strong, sustainable, growing outdoor recreation industry in Minnesota. It is a principal driver of the $850 million, 17,000-job recreation economy in Northeastern Minnesota, it contributes to hundreds of manufacturing jobs, and it helps keep and attract talent to Minnesota.

I urge the BLM to withdraw the 225,378 acres of national forest lands to protect the Boundary Waters from the

threat of endless sulfide-ore copper mining pollution. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
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