From: stayjayell@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Stacey R
To: Lands, BLM_ES
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Superior National Forest Withdrawal Application
Date: Saturday, December 18, 2021 10:36:15 AM

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Dear State Director of Geospatial Services F. David Radford,

Dear Bureau of Land Management ("BLM"),

I strongly support the proposed mineral withdrawal to protect 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 must not be put in danger by toxic, polluting industry.

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 and financial value - 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. It is the most-visited federally designated wilderness area.

· Water for our future - we must protect the water that we have. Every year, due to resource extraction, pollution, and climate change, this country loses access to enormous amounts of water that we need to survive. We cannot risk polluting clean water that hosts biodiversity.

· Biodiversity - the Boundary Waters, being as unique as they are, contain crucial habitats that support diverse wildlife that needs this habitat. This includes the American pine marten and ruffed grouse, whose habitats are focused in Minnesota. Without biodiversity, we weaken humans' abilities to survive.

These mineral leases pose an untenable, unnecessary, unacceptable risk to the Boundary Waters watershed.

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,

Stacey R
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