From: cfox0522@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Catherine Fox
To: Lands, BLM_ES
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Superior National Forest Withdrawal Application
Date: Saturday, December 18, 2021 12:07:08 PM

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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.

While I have never had the opportunity to visit the Boundary Waters, the importance of the health of the watershed is something we should all be concerned about. Many people in Louisiana (where I live) including the entire city of New Orleans rely on all parties in the 32 states and parts of Canada that are part of the Mississippi River Watershed to act responsibly due to the fact that the Mississippi River is the drinking water supply for New Orleans and many others in southeast Louisiana. Even though the Boundary Waters are one of the few areas of Minnesota not in the Mississippi River Watershed, it is part of two other watersheds (Great Lakes and Souris-Red Rainy). The potential impact of pollution from mining in this area could not only have detrimental impacts to the ecology and habitat of the area but could also impact the populated areas connected to the Boundary Waters through the watersheds, especially if any of their drinking water supplies are within those watersheds.

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,
Catherine Fox

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