From: PORTER, LAURINDA W.
To: Lands, BLM_ES
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Forest Service withdrawal of mineral leasing application in the Rainy River Watershed
Date: Saturday, December 18, 2021 12:29:19 PM

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Dear BLM workers,

I support the withdrawal of 225,378 acres of land from new mineral leasing in the Rainy River Watershed for 20 years. In my view, there should be NO mineral mining anywhere in the Rainy River Watershed EVER, not just in the next 20 years.

The environmental study to be undertaken by the BLM will no doubt determine that the Rainy River Watershed is not appropriate for mineral leasing. The environmental study should encompass the entire Rainy River Watershed. Here's why:

According to scientists at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, "Lakes and streams in the watersheds bordering the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in northern Minnesota offer some of the most pristine water quality in the state. Protection strategies such as forestland conservation, protective shoreline buffers, proper culvert installation, and septic system maintenance will be crucial to maintaining their healthy conditions, according to two draft reports by the MPCA.

"Excellent water quality in the Vermilion River and Rainy River - Headwaters watersheds is attributable to the forests and wetlands that dominate the area. They absorb and filter precipitation, resulting in far less runoff carrying pollutants into lakes and streams.

"'The rivers and lakes in these watersheds are some of the cleanest waters in the state,' says Katrina Kessler, MPCA assistant commissioner for water policy and agriculture. 'That's why it's so important that we focus not only on restoring waters that don't meet water quality standards, but also protecting lakes and streams from becoming impaired in the first place. That's especially true for areas like the Boundary Waters that are enjoyed and treasured by so many residents and visitors.'"

Focusing on protecting lakes and streams from becoming impaired is exactly the policy that should be followed by the BLM, USFS, USDA, and other federal agencies.

Please do not make any more applications for mineral leasing in northern Minnesota. Please cancel or rescind all existing applications and permits for mineral leasing on federal or state land.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Dr Rin Porter
Fairmont, MN 56031