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BLM Eastern States Lands
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041

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Dear BLM Eastern States:

I am a member of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers and the American Fisheries Society. My wife and I have been canoeing the BWCA since 1967 and still make biannual trips. We also cross-country ski and hike in the area. The BWCA and surrounding national forest is a crown jewel of wilderness and public lands in the United States.

I strongly encourage the reinstatement and completion of the proposed United States Forest Service led mineral withdrawal process upstream of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in the Superior National Forest (SNF). The mineral withdrawal process allows for consideration of a 20-year moratorium for sulfide-ore copper mining leases on federal public lands in the watershed of the BWCAW. This process and efforts to protect the area permanently are supported overwhelmingly by the hunting, fishing, canoeing, and outdoors community across the country and allows federal agencies to gather extensive ecological and economic data, as well as public comment, allowing for a thorough watershed level evaluation of the effects mining activities would have on the BWCAW.

Unlike Minnesota's iron and taconite mines, regionally untested sulfide-ore copper mining threatens fish, wildlife, water quality, and world-class camping, paddling, fishing, and hunting opportunities in a vast area known for its pristine water quality and remote character. Mining companies have never maintained the air and water quality expected of or promised by them, much less restored the environment after departing. The Boundary Waters is America's most-visited Wilderness Area and similar mineral withdrawal studies have helped establish policies to protect the health of watersheds in other treasured places like Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Canyon.

Our public lands and waters belong to all Americans and we have a collective obligation to the stewardship of our wildest places to ensure that future generations may experience them as we have. The Boundary Waters are no exception.

Sincerely,

Kim Jones

