

**Statement in Support of BLM Decision to Withdraw Lands in Rainy Watershed  
From Mineral Leasing for Twenty Years**

7113 Muirfield Lane  
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F. David Radford  
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BLM Eastern States Office  
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Honored Sir:

My name is Peder Otterson. I had hoped to provide aural testimony at the January 12, 2022, Hearing (I was 85 on the list of those scheduled to talk). Although disappointed, I appreciated hearing the comments from both sides. It seemed to me that those opposed to the plan, in general, had a vested interest in the development of copper nickel mining within the designated area. Those supporting the plan, including myself, saw the broader view. What, indeed, is the urgency that these lands be developed now, and not 20 years from now, if ever?

I am a hydrogeologist by training, and served in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Waters, for 34 years before retiring. However, before that, I worked on the Regional Copper Nickel Study in the mid-70s where I assisted on field studies of surface/groundwater movement of leachate from a waste rock stockpile at the Dunka Pit adjacent Bob Bay on Birch Lake in Lake County. Ours was a broad team made up of many different disciplines. I have maintained contact with some who were involved in the study including a retired mining engineer. We are of one mind that it was a bad idea back then, and is still that way today. There are just too many uncertainties involved. Back then, we were pretty unaware of global climate change; it wasn't that big an issue. Today, scientists already see the stresses upon the boreal forest. It would be foolish to add to this stress by arguing that the trace metals involved are needed for batteries, etc. in a more carbon-free world while failing to note the tremendous amount of energy required to refine the low-grade ore down to its mineral components, to say nothing about the air and water pollution also involved.

The world will not end in 20 years, but perhaps in that time, we will learn to better manage the resources to the betterment of all who depend upon them. By "all," I include the forests and critters of the lands and waters involved, and not just us humans.

Sincerely,



Peder H. Otterson  
DNR (Ret.)