

January 17, 2022

To:

F. David Radford, Deputy State Director of Geospatial Services
BLM Eastern States Office
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EASTERN STATES OFFICE

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Dear Mr. Radford,

As a lifelong resident of Ely, I was born above my Grandparents grocery store, Kobe's Grocery, on a minus 30 degree day in January 1948, I have lived here in Ely my whole life, except for the 4-years I served on active duty in the US Air Force from 1966 - 1970.

Having been a part of Ely for 70+ years has been to promote our natural resources, this city, the Ely Area, and the Iron Range.

I have done this as a lifelong Volunteer in local and area organizations, as well as being elected to the Ely, ISD #696, School Board and being the District's representative to the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) and the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS).

I belonged to and was actively involved as a member, and as an officer, in the Ely Jaycees, Ely Moose Lodge #1580, BSA Troop #170, Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club, Ely Little League, Ely Arts & Heritage Center Board, Chairman of the Highway 169 North Task Force, the Ely Cemetery Committee, United Steelworkers Local #1938 Safety & Political Action Comm., as well as being a Snowmobile Safety Instructor and a Firearms Safety Instructor.

I was a Boy Scout leader of many trips into the BWCA in which we taught our youth outdoor etiquette.

Ely used to bustle and thrive with nearly twice the current population with its 3-legged economic stool of Mining, Logging, and Tourism, being the Playground of a Nation.

Heck, even Ted Williams, the Baseball Hall of Famer, field tested hunting and Shakespeare fishing equipment here at Basswood Lodge because of our outdoor resources!

Basswood Lodge was condemned and torn down, along with nearly 40 other Resorts in the Ely Area with the passage of the 1964 BWCA (PL88-587) law.

Subsequently, the Wilderness Act of 1978 (PL95-495) did more to restrict our area outdoor recreation activities, because Wilderness zealots were not satisfied with what had already been done to restrict Resort, motorized, and outdoor activities in this area.

Just recently, the US Forest service again has cut down the number of permits for BWCAW use starting this Summer, down about 15% from previous years. Another Multi-Million dollar blow to the Ely economy according to local outfitters!

Ely Guides and almost every kid of working age, worked long hours during the summer tourist season for or in support of those Resorts and Related Businesses. Ely was booming!

Not so anymore after those laws, that in my opinion, wrecked our outdoor economy.

As a High School student, I helped remove and haul five (5) cabins across the ice from two (2) of those resorts, namely Evergreen Resort near Lewis' Narrows on Basswood Lake and from Nugent's Resort in Wind Bay of

Basswood near the Four Mile Portage, the Paul Bunyan Shop and Pete's Cabin Boats. It was a really sad time in Ely for my friends and their families that lost their family Resort businesses, and for many their private cabins.

U.S. Senator Hubert Humphrey said of the 1964 Law, "all other existing uses would remain", including the mining outside the BWCA, well, that is not what appears to be happening.

The 1978 Law continued to chip away at our outdoor recreation uses while our Congressman Jim Oberstar tried to protect our then existing uses outside the BWCA as the BWCA Recreation Area.

Well, that didn't happen. It got named a Wilderness Area with more and more restrictions.

This "Withdrawal" looks more like a backdoor attempt to enlarge the BWCAW at some point and restrict more of what can be done in our area outside the current BWCAW Boundaries.

Those of us who have lived here all our lives, want to make sure any industry, can and will maintain the highest environmental standards to keep our water and air clean for us and future generations.

I personally know many of the Twin Metals Minnesota staff and they live on several of the local lakes that would be directly impacted if they did not follow strict environmental laws and none of them want any adverse impacts to happen from this proposed mining operation, and neither do any of this project's supporters.

They are very conscious of what the project entails and the environmental impacts!

We need to environmentally mine and source these extremely valuable minerals right here in the Ely area, including on and under those 225,000 plus acres.

It will revitalize our local economy and supply critical Green Energy metals like the Biden Administration wants to source from the United States.

It will enhance our National Defense and Strategic Metals sourcing.

Therefore, I strongly oppose the BLM and Forest Service withdrawing the 225,000 plus acres of Federal Lands from new or continuing Mineral Leases for 20 years, or any term, near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

And, I strongly oppose the 2 year segregation that prohibits the issuance of new or continuing Federal Mineral prospecting permits or lease applications in the withdrawal area.

We already have strong EIS and regulatory review processes to effectively protect the environment, including the BWCAW and Rainy River Watershed.

Thank You for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



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