

For Immediate Release

December 2, 2020

Contact: Jeremy Drucker (612) 670-9650

SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

ICYMI:

[Bureau of Land Management to conduct NEPA review in Twin Metals prospect permitting case](#)

ELY, MN-- Earlier this week the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) volunteered to "cure the deficiencies" in its decision to extend thirteen prospecting permits for Antofagasta's Twin Metals, the Chilean mining conglomerate proposing to conduct risky sulfide-ore mining on the doorstep of America's most visited Wilderness, Minnesota's Boundary Waters. The prospecting permits were the first step toward a significant expansion of the current proposed mine which sits immediately next to lakes, rivers, and streams that flow directly into the Wilderness. The prospecting permits had been extended on May 1 without the BLM conducting legally required environmental review or consultation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service on impacts to endangered or threatened species. The legal challenge was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness (lead organization in the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters), and The Wilderness Society.

"The BLM failed to follow the law. It was required to consider environmental impacts and endangered species impacts of risky copper mining in the headwaters of the Wilderness before extending Twin Metals prospecting permits, some of which are on lands that border the Boundary Waters. Instead, the BLM did nothing except rush to grant mining approvals. This has been a hallmark of the Trump Administration's reckless push to fast track risky sulfide-ore mining next to the Boundary Waters," **said Tom Landwehr, Executive Director of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters.** "This is not the first time the Trump Administration has cut corners in order to permit the mine of Ivanka Trump's landlord, but hopefully it's the last."

There are currently two other federal lawsuits challenging Trump Administration actions for Twin Metals, including one challenge to the legality of reinstating expired leases and one on the sufficiency of their subsequent renewal.

This is the second time in a week that state or federal agencies have gone back to review rules or actions related to sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters because of actions led by Northeastern Minnesotans Wilderness (NMW) and its Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters. Last week, Minnesota's Department of Natural Resources agreed to review Minnesota's mining rules as they relate to areas near the Wilderness.

“We are leading the effort on multiple fronts,” **said Landwehr**, “to make sure sulfide-ore copper mining never happens in the watershed of the Boundary Waters. With great partners like The Wilderness Society and the Center for Biological Diversity, the Campaign has the expertise and strategic pathways to end this threat to the iconic Wilderness. A special thanks to the Center for Biological Diversity for representing NMW pro bono in this lawsuit.”