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Thousands of Minnesota Doctors Support Protecting Boundary Waters from Sulfide-Ore Copper Mining

Citing high risks to the environment and human health, Minnesota health care professionals support keeping sulfide-ore copper mining out of the Boundary Waters Watershed.

Ely, MN - On May 8, the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP), which represents more than 3,100 family physicians, residents and medical students, sent [a letter](#) to the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service calling for withdrawal of 234,328 acres of federal land in the Boundary Waters watershed from the federal mining program for up to 20 years, protecting Minnesota's iconic national treasure from the devastating impacts of mining pollution.

In the letter, these concerned healthcare professionals cite the dangers from toxic chemicals created by sulfide-ore copper mining as a major concern to human health stating:

“The World Health Organization lists the ten environmental toxins with greatest concern to human health. We know that sulfide ore mining releases at least six of these including mercury, lead, arsenic, asbestos, particulate air pollution and cadmium. These toxins have known harmful effects to human health including cancer, lung disease, heart disease, and neurodevelopmental disease.”

The letter also calls for including a comprehensive Health Risk Assessment and Health Impact Assessment as part of the larger environmental review process.

Read the letter in its entirety [here](#).

The serious negative impacts to human health caused by acid mine drainage detailed in this letter are a common concern. As part of this comment period, the EPA [released a letter](#) calling for any potential human health impacts associated with mineral exploration/development to be considered as a part of this environmental review process. Additionally, a [recent medical article](#) on the effects of acid mine drainage highlighted the importance of studying health impacts from sulfide-ore mining in Minnesota saying, “Because of our state’s water-rich environment and the chemical composition of sulfide ore, proposed sulfide mining raises concern about potential deleterious effects on human health.”

For more information on the threat from sulfide-ore copper mining and the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters visit SavetheBoundaryWaters.org.

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The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters is a broad coalition of more than 35 partner organizations, including conservation, sportsmen and veteran's groups. The Campaign is also supported by more than 250 local and national businesses. The Campaign is led by Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, which is based in Ely, Minnesota.