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Emmer introduces radical bill endangering the Boundary Waters Wilderness and surrounding economy

Ely, MN - Today, Congressman Tom Emmer [introduced](#) an unprecedented bill that would eliminate a proven environmental review process that has been in place for nearly 50 years, overturn the will of Minnesotans and allow a foreign mining company with a [terrible history of environmental violations](#) to build dangerous sulfide-ore copper mines on the edge of the Boundary Waters Wilderness.

“This bill is an attack on the Boundary Waters Wilderness and the sustainable Wilderness-based economy that depends on it,” said Becky Rom, national campaign chair for the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters. “Instead of following the established process and allowing citizens and scientists to decide the future of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, this bill allows outstate politicians and foreign mining interests to dictate the path forward for our state’s most valuable natural resource. This bill would remove the opportunity for public input and give a foreign mining conglomerate the green light to destroy America’s most visited Wilderness area.”

The proposed bill would undermine years of existing law by requiring congressional approval for any mineral withdrawal or National Monument designation in the Superior National Forest, and retroactively grant the renewal of two mineral leases held by Twin Metals Minnesota, a subsidiary of Chilean mining giant Antofagasta, despite these leases previously being [denied](#) due to the [extreme environmental risk](#) they posed to the Wilderness.

A [recent study](#) by Key-Log Economics shows that if the Twin Metals mine were to be built, the economic costs to the Arrowhead economy would be staggering and would far outweigh any alleged benefit. The study concludes that copper mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters would cost the Arrowhead region as many as [22,000 jobs](#) and up to \$1.6 billion in lost annual income, as well as property value loss of up to \$480 million.

This bill by Rep. Emmer goes against the will of Minnesotans. Last summer [tens of thousands](#) of people asked the U.S. Forest Service not to renew the expired Twin Metals leases and undertake the environmental review currently underway. [Polls show](#) that 79 percent of Minnesotans

support an ongoing environmental review to determine the risks posed by sulfide-ore copper mining, and 59 percent oppose this type of mining near the Boundary Waters Wilderness.

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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. For more information, visit: SavetheBoundaryWaters.org.