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More than 200 businesses join forces to protect Minnesota's Boundary Waters Wilderness

America's most-popular wilderness supports a thriving economy, but dangerous sulfide-ore copper mining threatens its pristine waters and thousands of jobs

More than 200 businesses from Northeastern Minnesota and across the state and country have joined together to support permanently protecting the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from proposed sulfide-ore copper mining on the Wilderness edge. The [Boundary Waters Business Coalition](#) includes rural small businesses, wilderness outfitters, manufacturers, hunting and fishing shops and others that rely on and the Boundary Waters to support their families as well as their quality of life.

“A thriving Boundary Waters means a thriving bottom line,” said Jason Zabokrtsky, owner of Ely Outfitting Company & Boundary Waters Guide Service. “Our jobs depend on a healthy Boundary Waters. Putting America's most toxic industry right next to America’s most visited Wilderness would put shops like ours out of business.”

The Boundary Waters and Voyageurs National Park form the centerpiece of Minnesota’s [thriving outdoor recreation economy](#), which produces \$11.6 billion annually in consumer spending and 118,000 direct jobs statewide - including 17,000 jobs and brings \$913 million in sales annually [in Northeastern Minnesota alone](#). The recreation economy includes hotels, restaurants, retail shops, gas stations, wilderness outfitters, manufacturers of outdoor clothing and gear, and many other businesses that benefit local economies.

“My staff and I want to ensure that anglers now and in the future can experience the joy and excitement of hooking a bass in the Boundary Waters,” said John Fehnel, who owns Great Lakes Fly Shop in Duluth. “Sulfide-ore mining would directly impact the region’s incredible aquatic species, pristine water quality and thriving recreation economy. It would directly impact our business, employees and many of our customers.”

The Boundary Waters Business Coalition includes companies such as Namebini, Epicurean, Fishpond, Klean Kanteen, Osprey, Simms Fishing, Rio Products and Patagonia. Local Ely businesses that helped found the movement to protect the Boundary Waters from sulfide-ore copper mining include Piragis Northwoods Co., Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge, Wintergreen Northern Wear, River Point Resort & Outfitting Co. and Ely Outfitting Co. & Boundary Waters Guide Service. For a full list, click [HERE](#).

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The Boundary Waters Business Coalition is supported by the [Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters](#) and [Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters](#), which are leading the effort to gain permanent protection for the Boundary Waters Wilderness from sulfide-ore copper mining.