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New poll: Minnesotans support mining, but not near the Boundary Waters

Republican pollster finds 2-to-1 statewide margin against mining near the BWCA, including consistent and significant opposition in MN-8

Ely, MN—Results of a new poll from President Donald Trump’s chief polling firm, Fabrizio Ward, shows that while Minnesotans generally support sulfide-ore copper mining in the state, nearly 60% oppose it near the Boundary Waters and less than 30% support it. In Minnesota’s Eighth Congressional District, which contains the Iron Range, opposition to sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters exceeds support by double digit margins.

A memo prepared by pollster Bob Ward also finds protecting the Boundary Water from sulfide-ore copper mining is a potent electoral issue, with likely implications for future statewide races.

“By a 4-1 statewide margin, and even decisively in the 8th Congressional District, the potential appeal of mining jobs is cross-pressured by the desire to preserve the natural environment, the advantage is to the candidate who fights for the Boundary Waters Wilderness,” writes Ward.

The Boundary Waters is a world-class wilderness – America’s most popular – made up of some of the world’s cleanest water. It draws hundreds of thousands of people every year from all over the world to fish, hunt, camp, paddle and otherwise take part in Northeastern Minnesota’s \$850 million tourism and recreation economy, which supports 17,000 jobs.

In December, acting in accordance with longstanding laws enacted with bipartisan support, federal land managers [made the decision](#) put a pause on mining activities while they conducted a comprehensive public study to determine whether or not future mining should be allowed in the Boundary Waters watershed based on all scientific and economic factors, including robust public comment. The U.S. Forest Service will conduct its first public session related to the study on Thursday in Duluth.

Nearly 8 in 10 Minnesotans support this thorough ongoing study, including 70% of eighth congressional district residents. When compared with a process that first allows a mine company to present a mine plan, a whopping 70% of voters statewide favored the direction federal land managers are currently taking, including 61% in the eighth congressional district. This support crosses all party lines.

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