

For Immediate Release

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SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

Star Tribune Editorial:

[Biden administration should renew the push to protect the BWCA](#)

"Clean water and conservation are part of 'our way of life' in Minnesota"

Ely, MN--Yesterday the Star Tribune published an editorial urging the Biden-Harris administration to renew the push to protect Minnesota's Boundary Waters, America's most visited Wilderness. The editorial views Boundary Waters protection within the President's visionary 30x30 initiative and urges immediate action by the current administration to complete the mineral withdrawal that was abruptly cancelled by the Trump administration, as well as review the dubious legal manoeuvrings that led to the reinstatement and subsequent renewal of two federal mineral leases.

The editorial reads, in part:

President Joe Biden has committed to an extraordinary measure to protect the nation's natural resources — signing an executive order on Wednesday that aims to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.

One of the first steps in making this "30 by 30" plan a reality ought to be completing the vital work interrupted by the Trump administration — preventing irreparable harm to northeastern Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCA). This beloved, fragile ecosystem is endangered. The Chilean-owned mining conglomerate Antofagasta wants to open an underground 20,000-ton-per-day copper mine called Twin Metals on the edge of a lake whose waters drain into the BWCA.

As the Star Tribune Editorial Board argued in a 2019 special report, "The BWCA is not a place to try to manage pollution risks; it is where risk must be rejected altogether." Assurances about new mining technology are no guarantee against failures and errors that could allow mine pollution to flow into the wilderness.

In 2016, the outgoing Obama administration rejected key Twin Metals lease renewals needed to mine federally owned land. This decision also kicked off a two-year scientific study to determine if copper mining's risks to the BWCA watershed necessitated a 20-year moratorium on the mining site.

Dubious legal maneuvering by the Trump administration led to renewal of the leases Twin Metals sought. The administration also halted the scientific study just months before its completion, then kept it under wraps.

Swiftly reviewing the legal maneuvering and committing to completing the halted study would be a strong, high-profile start to carrying out the praiseworthy new "30 by 30" plan. Tom Vilsack, Biden's pick to lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture, also understands copper mining's threat to the BWCA. That's another reason for an early focus on Twin Metals as "30 by 30" gets underway.

You can read the full piece [here](#).