

For Immediate Release

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SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

Statement on Federal Announcement to Proceed with Risky Mine Plan Near the Boundary Waters

ELY, MN- Today the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published a [Notice of Intent](#) in the Federal Register to begin reviewing Antofagasta's Twin Metals sulfide-ore mining project on the edge of the Boundary Waters. In response Tom Landwehr, Executive Director of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters, issued the following statement:

“As the nation reels from the pandemic and social unrest, it is telling that the Administration’s priority is a reckless push for risky sulfide-ore copper mining on the doorstep of Minnesota’s crown jewel.”

“They have shredded the federal Clean Water Act, gutted the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), arbitrarily reinstated expired leases, made a joke of the environmental review process and ignored citizens, cancelled critical studies, and suppressed important science, all with the with goal of handing over America’s most popular Wilderness to be exploited for the benefit of a Chilean multinational mining company.”

“[America has 24 mines producing copper](#). There is no shortage of copper, but there is only one Boundary Waters.”

Today’s notice of intent confirms that the BLM’s highest priority under this Administration – even in the Boundary Waters watershed – is exploitation of Americans’ public lands for private gain. Under direction from the Secretary of the Interior, the agency will conduct the most superficial of reviews – at breakneck speed and with arbitrary page limits. Just a week ago, the state of

Minnesota declared this same Twin Metals mine plan to be incomplete and some material representations to be false. Make no mistake – the Trump Administration is gutting our environmental laws, and that is why if this mine were built, now more than ever it would pollute the Boundary Waters. Every sulfide-ore copper mine has polluted water, and this one would, too.

Timeline of Trump Administration actions fast tracking the destruction of the Boundary Waters:

December 2016: Twin Metals leases deemed too dangerous by the US Forest Service and not renewed. Mineral withdrawal and study of impacts of sulfide-ore copper mining on Boundary Waters announced.

December 2017: The Trump administration rejects the unanimous view of the Johnson, Obama, and Reagan administrations, instead announces “legal error” in previous Twin Metals lease decision.

May 2018: Arbitrary reinstatement of expired Twin Metals leases.

September 2018: Mineral withdrawal and study abruptly canceled just prior to release. The Trump administration has refused countless demands from the public, Congress, and the press to release the study and background reports.

May 2019: After the most superficial of environmental reviews that did not even consider the impact of mining, Twin Metals is granted sweetheart lease renewals granting it use of public lands next to the Boundary Waters in perpetuity.

June 2020: The Trump administration finalizes changes to the Clean Water Act that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) says will prevent Minnesota from protecting the Boundary Waters from a Twin Metals mine.

June 2020: Citing the Coronavirus pandemic, Trump signs an Executive Order instructing federal agencies to waive long-standing environmental laws making it easier to expedite harmful projects.

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