

For Immediate Release

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SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

ICYMI:

[Biden administration reviewing Trump administration's renewal of Twin Metals leases next to the Boundary Waters](#)

Biden administration also looking at the unlawful reinstatement of the leases

(Ely, MN)-- Last week in a [court filing](#) the Biden administration announced that it was reviewing litigation regarding the renewal of Twin Metals mineral leases. In 2019 Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness (the lead organization in the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters), nine Minnesota businesses, and four conservation groups filed a lawsuit challenging the unlawful renewal of the leases. The lawsuit was the second legal challenge to Trump administration actions surrounding Twin Metals leases. The first lawsuit challenged the unlawful reinstatement of the leases after they were lawfully terminated by the Obama Administration. The Biden administration is reviewing both lawsuits as well as the history of the Twin Metals mineral leases.

"We are pleased to see the Biden administration reviewing the unlawful reinstatement and renewal of Twin Metals leases next to the Boundary Waters," said Save the Boundary Waters Executive Director Tom Landwehr. **"We believe the review will lay bare the politically motivated decision-making of the Trump administration and return science-based and law abiding decision making to our nation's public lands management."**

In a story Friday from the Duluth News Tribune:

A federal judge on Thursday approved a request by the U.S. Justice Department to pause a lawsuit filed last year by a coalition of environmental groups and canoe outfitters that argued federal agencies failed to conduct a thorough environmental review ahead of the renewal of key leases to Twin Metals. The pause until June 21 will allow the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture, which are both under new leadership, to review the Trump administration's decision to renew the leases, the Justice Department said in a court filing.

The review stems from an executive order signed by President Joe Biden on his first day in office directing federal agencies to review all actions taken during the Trump administration that may conflict with his administration's goal "to listen to the science; to improve public health and protect our environment; to ensure access to clean air and water" and other criteria.

"A stay of 90 days is appropriate due to the complexity of the decisions challenged and the long history of the leases, going back over 60 years," Acting Assistant Attorney General Jean Williams wrote in the motion. "A 90-day stay is also appropriate to allow new decision makers at the agencies to balance review of this matter with the ongoing review of other agency actions in accordance with President Biden's Executive Order."

Both Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack have opposed mining in the Rainy River Watershed, which is shared with the BWCAW and is where Twin Metals is planning its underground mine, processing plant and dry-stacked tailings storage facility.

Twin Metals opponents, who fear pollution from the mine will flow into the BWCAW, are hopeful this new review will lead to a return of restrictions placed in the final days of the Obama administration — when Biden was vice president and Vilsack was in his first stint as agriculture secretary — which effectively killed the project until President Donald Trump's reversal.

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