

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Alex Falconer (612) 419-3423

SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

ICYMI:

[Power structure at McCollum-bill hearing shows what local BWCA supporters are up against](#)

ELY, MN--This week MinnPost published an opinion piece by Steve Piragis, a local Ely business owner, that outlined the power structure arrayed against those local Minnesotans who love the Boundary Waters. This power structure was on full display at the Feb. 5th hearing in Washington, DC on Rep. Betty McCollum's bill that would permanently protect the Boundary Waters from the threat of sulfide-ore copper mining. In the piece he writes:

The nature of the power structure arrayed against those of us who love the Boundary Waters and whose livelihoods depend on it were on clear display in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 5. I went to Washington with other local Ely business people, including another canoe trip outfitter, an owner of an outdoor clothing manufacturing company and winter dogsled business, and the executive director of a wilderness-focused nonprofit organization that has been taking people into the Boundary Waters for many decades. Together the payrolls for our five businesses provide over \$4 million in annual income to the Ely area.....

.....Although sulfide-ore mining boosters like U.S. Rep. Pete Stauber of Minnesota's 8th District are quick to claim that opposition to copper mining near the Boundary Waters is an "insult to local people," the Antofagasta supporters at the Feb. 5 hearing were not local people. They were instead an Antofagasta/ Twin Metals executive, a Minnesota Power executive, the chief lobbyist for the Minnesota copper-mining industry, and an employee of a mining construction company. In fact, the real insult to locals like me and my employees, friends, and colleagues, and to the thousands of other people who live in northeastern Minnesota because of the Boundary Waters, is the determination of

powerful organizations to ride roughshod over the public interest. The great majority of Minnesotans get this — poll after poll shows a strong majority of people in every part of the state opposed to copper mining near the Boundary Waters.

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