

For Immediate Release

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SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

Mark Dayton:

[Sulfide-ore mining has no business near our Boundary Waters](#)

Today the Star Tribune published a commentary from former Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton (2011-2019) regarding risky sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters Wilderness. In 2016 Governor Dayton took strong action to protect the Wilderness from Chilean mining conglomerate Antofagasta's Twin Metals project by instructing the Department of Natural Resources to grant no further access to state lands to the mining company.

Antofagasta's current mine plan requires additional state land to build a tailings dump one-half mile from the shores of Birch Lake, a popular recreational lake that flows directly into the Wilderness. The 430-acre tailings dump would be used to store over a hundred million tons of toxic waste rock and at 130 feet tall would tower more than 80 feet over the surrounding forest.

Governor Dayton writes, in part:

The BWCA is a priceless treasure, which attracts visitors from all over our country and around the world. Its vast forests and waterways provide recreation and respite — a place to bask in the beauty of untrammelled nature. Wolves, lynx, moose, loons, eagles, walleyes, northerns and hundreds more species of wild creatures grace its land, air and water. Generations of families have made BWCA trips cornerstones of their times together. Vibrant and sustainable local economies thrive in nearby communities.

We inherited this pristine wilderness from previous generations of Minnesotans, who bequeathed it to us to benefit not only ourselves, but also our children, our grandchildren, and their children and grandchildren. Now it is our responsibility to protect this fragile ecosystem from those who would exploit it for their own selfish purposes.

Right now, it is threatened by Chilean mining company Antofagasta, which has despoiled natural resources in that country and elsewhere. Antofagasta wants to dig an enormous copper-nickel mine, called Twin Metals, right on the edge of the BWCA and excavate millions of tons of ore. Any leakage from the mine's residue of highly toxic sulfide ore into the nearby waters would cause catastrophic and irreparable damage.

When I was governor, I made it clear that I support mining where it can be conducted safely, but not where it threatens fragile, irreplaceable ecosystems. In March 2016, I wrote to Twin Metals and stated my opposition to copper-nickel mining near the BWCA. I directed the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources not to allow any new access to state lands for mineral exploration or mining near the BWCA. I also informed both the Obama and Trump administrations of where I stood and why the BWCA needed their protection.

The former governor concludes by urging the Biden-Harris administration and Congress to seize this opportunity to permanently protect the Boundary Waters for future generations.

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