

For Immediate Release

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SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

ICYMI: [Minnesota must act to save BWCA](#)

The Star Tribune recently ran an OpEd by former Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner and current Save the Boundary Waters Executive Director Tom Landwehr laying out the case for why Minnesota must take action to protect its crown jewel. The Trump Administration has eviscerated bedrock environmental regulations and processes to the endangerment of the nation's clean air and water and public lands, and removed critical protections for the Boundary Waters. Minnesota must strengthen its own laws and regulations - never designed to protect the Boundary Waters - if we are to preserve this priceless Wilderness from a sulfide-ore copper mine that even Antofagasta's Twin Metals acknowledges is risky.

Landwehr writes:

In 2016 the U.S. Forest Service concluded beyond any doubt that copper mining near the BWCA posed an unacceptable risk of irreparable damage to this priceless wilderness and canceled Chilean mining conglomerate Antofagasta's Twin Metals project. Through a well-documented series of tricks and schemes the Trump administration revived the project and drove it forward, ignoring the rule of law, sidelining science and hiding the evidence from Congress, the press and the public.

The Trump administration has weakened or flat-out eliminated one hundred environmental protections, many with direct roles in protecting the clean air and water of Minnesota. For example, changes to critical Clean Water Act regulations mean that Minnesota can no longer protect its own lakes, streams and wetlands from degradation. In response, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency wrote: "It is likely that a second copper nickel mining facility [Chilean mining conglomerate

Antofagasta's Twin Metals] will be proposed and begin environmental review ... in Minnesota; EPA's proposed rule would leave us unable to address potential water quality concerns in or near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness." Other actions eliminating protections include a presidential executive order that directs agencies to waive or restrict environmental laws and reviews of risky projects. Taken together these represent the most sweeping and significant attacks on the environment in history, and leave Minnesota and the BWCA especially vulnerable.

With this backdrop, the state is presented with a mine plan from Twin Metals that is significantly more dangerous than the one it touted just a year ago. Not only does the plan suffer from all the endemic issues that plague an industry the Environmental Protection Agency has repeatedly identified as the most toxic in America, but it also calls for the storage of hundreds of millions of tons of toxic waste on state land immediately adjacent to the waters of Birch Lake, which flow into the Boundary Waters. In a preliminary review of the mine plan, the DNR found it to be incomplete and to contain material misrepresentations of critical facts.

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