

**For Immediate Release**

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# SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

## [Sen. Tina Smith Announces Support for Federal Action to Protect the Boundary Waters](#)

*Letter from Sen. Smith to federal agencies asks for completion of canceled mineral withdrawal study which could lead to 20 years of protection for America's most visited Wilderness*

**Ely, MN**--Today Sen. Tina Smith urged Secretaries Vilsack and Haaland to initiate the federal mineral withdrawal process for consideration of a ban on mining on public lands adjacent to Minnesota's Boundary Waters Wilderness. The environmental assessment would evaluate the environmental and economic impacts of withdrawing federal lands and minerals from the federal mining program for up to twenty years. Such a withdrawal would protect the Boundary Waters from the inevitable damage that would result from sulfide-ore copper mining on federal lands in its headwaters.

Last week the Biden administration announced it was reviewing the unlawful reinstatement and renewal of mineral leases held by Chilean mining conglomerate Antofagasta's Twin Metals for a sulfide-ore copper mine located on the doorstep to the Wilderness.

In response to Senator Smith's letter, Campaign to Save Boundary Waters Executive Director Tom Landwehr said:

**"Minnesota's Boundary Waters is a national treasure and a fundamental part of Minnesotans' way of life. Senator Tina Smith's support for protecting this priceless natural wonder and the thousands of jobs that depend upon it is tremendous news for not just Minnesotans, but for the thousands upon thousands of Americans who love this special place. We believe this science-based environmental assessment will show decision-makers the Boundary Waters should be protected. This is a critical step on the path to permanent protection."**

The Boundary Waters is the most heavily visited wilderness area in the United States, attracting more than 155,000 visitors from all over the world and helps drive more than [\\$900 million](#) in annual economic activity and helps support over 17,000 jobs. [A peer-reviewed independent study](#) from Harvard University showed that protecting the Boundary Waters from a proposed Twin Metals sulfide-ore copper mine would result in dramatically more jobs and more income over a 20-year period.

Nearly [seventy percent](#) of Minnesotans support a ban on sulfide-ore copper mining near the Wilderness to permanently protect the Boundary Waters. During the public comment periods for the first mineral withdrawal process over 180,000 Americans voiced support for the proposed mining ban. This first mineral withdrawal process was abruptly cancelled by the Trump administration and the underlying studies suppressed.

You can read the [letter](#) here.