



## **The Issue**

Sulfide-ore copper mining has been proposed by Twin Metals (a Minnesota company owned by Chilean mining conglomerate Antofagasta) less than a mile from the Boundary Waters. In December, the U.S. Forest Service [denied](#) mining leases held by Twin Metals due to the extreme environmental risks they posed to the Boundary Waters. Following the lease denial, the Forest Service began a two-year environmental review to determine if sulfide-ore copper mining should be banned in the Boundary Waters watershed. This review is [ongoing](#).

## **The Threat**

According to the EPA, sulfide-ore copper mining is the most toxic industry in the United States. This type of mining is so risky that it has never been done before in Minnesota. Sulfuric acid and heavy metals, such as mercury and copper, are dangerous by-products of sulfide-ore copper mining. They have the potential to permanently pollute the Boundary Waters. To make matters worse, Antofagasta has a [long history](#) of environmental violations and contamination in their home country of Chile.

## **What's Happening Now?**

The Forest Service is conducting an environmental review that we hope will result in a ban on sulfide-ore copper mining in the Boundary Waters watershed for up to 20 years. However, the ongoing environmental review is being threatened by U.S. Representatives Rick Nolan and Tom Emmer who [added an amendment](#) to the federal funding bill that, if passed, will eliminate federal funding for the environmental review. Beyond this, Tom Emmer also [introduced a separate bill](#) that would end the environmental review altogether and grant mining leases to Twin Metals indefinitely.

## **What Minnesotans Think:**

Overall, Minnesotans don't want to see the mining leases renewed. Nearly [60 percent](#) of Minnesotans oppose sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters, while only 30 percent support it. Additionally, [79 percent](#) of Minnesotans are in favor of the ongoing two-year environmental review. Minnesota elected officials including, [Betty McCollum](#), [Erik Paulsen](#), [Keith Ellison](#), [Mark Dayton](#) and [Al Franken](#) have spoken out in favor of protecting the Boundary Waters.