



THE RUSH TO RUIN

THE BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS, THE SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST, VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK, AND CANADA'S QUETICO PARK

2019

In 2016 the U.S. Forest Service concluded that sulfide-ore copper mining in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness posed inherent risks of serious harm to the *“unique, iconic, and irreplaceable wilderness area”* and withheld its consent to renewal of the only two federal mineral leases in the Superior; the leases were then cancelled.

NOW: The Trump Administration is fast-tracking the grant of public lands and minerals in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters to foreign mining company Antofagasta.

- Peer-reviewed science shows that (i) sulfide-ore copper mining would seriously pollute the Boundary Waters and downstream lands and waters and (ii) this damage could not be mitigated or fixed.
- Independent economic studies show that the Boundary Waters region would enjoy more jobs and income if copper mining were banned.
- Ideological and corporate interest considerations have been given precedence over massive evidence of the harm that sulfide-ore copper mining would cause to valuable and uniquely vulnerable public lands and waters.

At risk are the nation's most-visited Wilderness (and only significant lakeland Wilderness) and downstream protected public lands and waters.

- The clean water of the Superior National Forest, which includes the Boundary Waters, constitutes 20% of the freshwater in the entire 193-million-acre national forest system.

RECENT ACTION: On May 15, 2019 the Bureau of Land Management announced that it granted renewals of Twin Metals leases. This followed a woefully inadequate Environmental Assessment issued on the eve of the partial government shutdown with the comment period over the year-end holidays.

- The EA identified no environmental or economic impacts and did no analysis of harm.
- The EA did not consider denial of the mineral leases.
- The public had less than 40 days to comment (which included the year-end holidays).

The Trump Administration is short-circuiting established laws and procedures, making legally indefensible interpretations, and sidestepping treaties designed to protect the Boundary Waters and the rest of the Superior National Forest, Voyageurs, and Quetico – all while sharply limiting environmental review and public involvement, and disregarding and suppressing science that shows harm to the environment, the economy, and human health.

- **Cancelling at the 11th hour a Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) study of a proposed 20-year ban on mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters.**
- **Reinstating two expired federal mineral leases – effectively treating expired 20-year leases as 63-year leases.**
- **Granting mineral leases without legally required Forest Service consent or adequate environmental review.**
- **Ignoring state and federal water quality laws and regulations protective of the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs.**
- **Ignoring Wilderness laws protecting the Boundary Waters and the rest of the Superior National Forest.**
- **Ignoring the U.S. – Canada Boundary Waters Treaty protective of Quetico.**
- **Ignoring the 1854 Treaty with Chippewa tribes.**

The Trump Administration is dismissing science and suppressing its own scientific and economic reports that show harm to the environment, the economy, and human health.

- **Refusing to provide its own reports and studies completed during the FLPMA study of a proposed 20-year mining ban to Congress and the public.**
- **Ignoring science, economics, and the testimony of experts, including at least 55 directly relevant reports, submitted to federal agencies over the past five years.**
- **Ignoring the studies cited in the detailed U.S. Forest Service denial of consent**

The Trump Administration is dismissing and disregarding the views of the American people.

- **Three federal public comment processes (2016 – 2019) involved high levels of public participation and overwhelming support for banning copper mining.**
 - **Over 344,000 comments; more than 94% in support of protection**
 - **Five public hearings; speakers nearly 2-1 in favor of protection**
 - **More than 55 scientific and economic reports and studies showing damage to the environment, the economy, and public health**

TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT THE BOUNDARY WATERS AND DOWNSTREAM LANDS & WATERS

- **DEMAND THAT DECISIONS BE BASED ON FACTS AND SCIENCE**
- **DEMAND THAT THE NATION'S LAWS BE RESPECTED AND FOLLOWED AND THAT THE PUBLIC BE FULLY ENGAGED**
- **DEMAND STEWARDSHIP OF OUR NATION'S MOST VISITED NATIONAL WILDERNESS AREA: DO NOT SACRIFICE THE BOUNDARY WATERS FOR SHORT TERM PROFITS OF A FOREIGN MINING COMPANY**