

**For Immediate Release**

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# SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

## **New report details how Twin Metals is greenwashing risky mining next to the Boundary Waters**

**(Ely, MN)**--Today the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters released a [report](#) detailing how Chilean mining giant Antofagasta is "greenwashing" its risky Twin Metals mining project next to Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The report shows how Twin Metals is attempting to make this dangerous project seem less risky and more necessary than it is in three key areas: by claiming so-called dry stack technology will eliminate the risk from tailings despite the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources [saying](#) it is the wrong method for Northeastern Minnesota; by claiming, without proof, their tailings will not be acid generating; and by falsely claiming the mine is needed for a clean energy future.

**"The Boundary Waters is a national treasure and Minnesota's crown jewel," said Save the Boundary Waters National Chair Becky Rom. "Antofagasta's Twin Metals poses a grave and wholly unnecessary risk to this priceless Wilderness and the thousands of jobs that depend on its health. Despite the spin from its PR pros, Twin Metals is guaranteed to damage the fragile ecosystem of the Boundary Waters while it's contributions to a green economy would be insignificant and irrelevant to our clean energy future."**

The most recent [data](#) from the Environmental Protection Agency shows that hard rock metal mining, the kind of mine Twin Metals would operate, is again the largest emitter of toxic releases across all industries. The data also shows that three of the mines held up by Twin Metals as [examples](#) of pollution-free mine waste storage using dry stack technology are some of

the most toxic industrial sites in the nation. Hecla's Greens Creek Mine (Alaska) is no. 4 nationally, with more than 58 million tons of toxic material on-site in 2019, Eagle Mine (Michigan) is no. 53 and Pogo Mine (Alaska) is no. 66.

In addition to being massive emitters of toxic material, the Alaska mines in particular have a terrible environmental track record. A [March 2020 report](#) from Earthworks found that of the 5 mines they reviewed (including Greens Creek and Pogo):

- **All five mines have experienced at least one major spill or other accidental release of hazardous materials such as mine tailings, cyanide solution, diesel fuel and ore concentrate**
- **Four of the five mines failed to capture or control contaminated mine water, resulting in water quality violations that often occurred over an extended period.**
- **Four out of five mines have been identified by EPA as out of compliance with federal laws to protect clean air or water in the last three years.**
- **Metals pollution from two mines has contaminated public lands designated as National Monuments.**
- **The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process at four of the mines underestimated water quality impacts, failing to predict violations of federal and state laws.**

The impact from a Twin Metals mine on the green economy would be insignificant next to the risks posed to the Boundary Waters. The deposits Twin Metals seeks to develop are low grade - less than 1% of the ore contains metals and would generate insignificant amounts of metals. Based on [2019 figures](#) from the U.S. Geological Survey and on Twin Metals' own production projections, a Twin Metals mine would provide amounts equal to only 2.3% of copper consumption, 3.6% of nickel consumption, and 1.5% of cobalt consumption in the U.S. annually.<sup>[1]</sup>

Furthermore the minerals mined by Twin Metals would do nothing to make the United States more secure. Instead, they would enrich foreign nations with American natural resources. According to [documents filed](#) by Antofagasta and Twin Metals with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the concentrates would be shipped abroad, with all signs leading to low-cost smelters in China where Antofagasta currently ships metals from its South American mines. The refined metals then would be sold on the world market.

The Boundary Waters is the most heavily-visited Wilderness Area in the United States, attracting more than 160,000 visitors annually from all over the world. It helps drive more than [\\$900 million](#) in annual economic activity and helps support over 17,000 jobs. [A peer-reviewed independent study](#) by Harvard University economists showed that protecting the Boundary Waters from sulfide-ore copper mining would result in dramatically more jobs and more income in the region over a 20-year period than if a Twin Metals mine were operating.

Nearly [seventy percent](#) of Minnesotans support a ban on sulfide-ore copper mining near 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 to protect the Boundary Waters.

In 2016 the U.S. Forest Service concluded that sulfide-ore copper mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters would pose an unacceptable risk of harm to the Wilderness and that any damage could not be mitigated or fixed. Because the U.S. Forest Service denied consent to renewal of two Twin Metals mineral leases, the leases terminated. In 2018 the Trump administration unlawfully reinstated the expired leases and subsequently renewed them. The Biden administration is currently reviewing pending litigation on the lease reinstatement and renewals.

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