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**Listening session today will help determine whether the border of Minnesota's Boundary Waters is the right place for America's most toxic industry**

*Two-thirds of Minnesotans oppose sulfide-ore copper mining near the Wilderness, including 60% in the Eighth Congressional District.*

Today, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is holding a public listening session in Duluth, MN, to help it determine whether the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Areas Wilderness (BWCAW) is the right place for [America's most toxic industry](#). The USFS is weighing whether or not to consent to renew two expired leases to mine sulfide-ore copper on public lands in the Superior National Forest right next to the Wilderness.

Polling shows [two-thirds of Minnesotans](#) oppose sulfide-ore copper mining near the BWCAW—including more than 60 percent in Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District — which includes the Iron Range and Duluth. In the last two weeks more than 55,000 people have signed petitions telling the USFS to withhold consent to renewing the leases.

“The Boundary Waters Wilderness is a national treasure – a major economic driver for Minnesota communities, a world-renowned destination for outdoor recreation, and one of our state’s most precious natural resources,” said Becky Rom, National Chair of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters. “The science is clear: sulfide-ore copper mining would bring devastating impacts to the Boundary Waters and our communities that rely on it. It’s simply not the place for sulfide-ore copper mining.”

The BWCAW helps drive more than [\\$850 million in economic activity](#) every year and supports [nearly 17,000 jobs](#).

A study published recently in the [Journal of Hydrology](#) shows that pollution from the proposed Twin Metals mine sites would flow into the BWCAW even under the ordinary course of mining operations. The peer-reviewed study concludes that contamination from the mine sites could significantly damage the Wilderness. Fifty-three leading scientists in ecology and natural resource-based disciplines also signed a [letter](#) expressing deep concern over the proposed mine sites.

Mineral leases held by Twin Metals were issued in 1966, before modern environmental regulations, including the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the law that requires environmental impacts to be considered before decisions are made where mines can be sited. These leases have never undergone environmental review.

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## **WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT SULFIDE-ORE COPPER MINING NEAR THE BOUNDARY WATERS WILDERNESS**

“...The Boundary Waters Canoe Area does not belong just to Minnesotans. It belongs to all Americans, those living now and generations from now. Ely is not only its gateway, but also its guardian. That obligation to protect the BWCA and preserve its wilderness is a responsibility shared by all Minnesotans. We have no right to risk its vulnerable ecology for the financial benefit of a large international mining conglomerate and their Minnesota investors.”

--[Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton](#)

“Arizona has its Grand Canyon, Wyoming its Yellowstone, California its Yosemite. These wonders come to mind unbidden as images of a place when those states are named. The Boundary Waters is such an image for Minnesota. It is also our responsibility ... We must do what Minnesotans before us have done: defend the wilderness ... today I join Minnesota’s Gov. Mark Dayton and urge the federal land management agencies to continue the work of nearly 100 years and to ensure that the Boundary Waters wilderness remains the place it is today.”

--[Former Vice President Walter Mondale](#)

“The Boundary Waters is a national treasure for sportsmen and outdoor enthusiasts - and serves as an economic engine for the communities in northeastern Minnesota .... Sulfide-ore copper mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters could affect wildlife conservation efforts and the quality of hunting opportunities throughout this remarkable region. For all these reasons, we strongly urge your [Secretaries Jewell and Vilsack] Departments’ vigilance to conserve the habitat of Boundary Waters for the benefit for wildlife and sportsmen for generations to come.”

--[President’s Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council](#)

“The dark suits and flashy rings and the long line of limousines ferrying Antofagasta executives during their 2010 Minnesota visit did not inspire confidence that their Chilean mining conglomerate should be entrusted to mine next to the state’s beloved Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.”

--[Minneapolis Star Tribune Editorial](#)

“[Twin Metals] leases should be reviewed in the context of 50 years of advancements in science plus the need to protect public lands and ecosystems from unrelenting development pressures. Not to mention decades of pollution problems created nationwide by these kinds of mines. The signs are obvious — and growing: Permanently protect the Boundary Waters from the dangers of heavy-metal mining.”

--[St. Cloud Times Editorial](#)

“The Boundary Waters region has built its economy on pristine water and wilderness, and the impact of that economy extends throughout the state to businesses like Wenonah Canoe in Winona. Minnesota would simply be a different state without the Boundary Waters.

--[Rochester Post-Bulletin Editorial](#)