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## **Boundary Waters supporters deliver over 72,000 petitions urging the US Forest Service to withhold consent for sulfide-ore copper mining leases near the Wilderness**

Duluth, MN—Today Boundary Waters Wilderness supporters delivered over 72,000 petitions urging the US Forest Service (USFS) to withhold consent to sulfide-ore copper mining leases on the border of the Wilderness. [Independent science](#) clearly shows the virtually inevitable threat of pollution to the Boundary Waters should mining occur so close and [recent polling shows two thirds of Minnesotans](#) oppose sulfide-ore copper mining adjacent to the wilderness –including more than 61% in the 8th Congressional District.

“Minnesotans and Americans are speaking up loud and clear to protect this special place,” said Jason Zabokrtsky, Ely small businessman and board member for the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters. “The Boundary Waters Wilderness is a national treasure and the centerpiece driving sustainable economies all over the Arrowhead region. The overwhelming opposition to this risky type of mining is a clear sign that people do not want America’s most toxic industry next to America’s most popular wilderness.”

The number of petitions being submitted tops the number submitted during the public comment for Minnesota’s other sulfide-ore copper mining project, PolyMet. Over 58,000 public comments were submitted for that project.

The petitions were gathered by the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters and their partner organizations including:

- Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
- Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters
- Vet Voice
- National Wildlife Federation
- Keep America Fishing
- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
- Izaak Walton League of America
- Wilderness Watch
- Creation Justice Ministries
- Environment MN
- Sierra Club
- Water Legacy
- Environmental Action

In addition to the more than 65,000 petitions urging the USFS to withhold consent yesterday Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters released a [letter](#) urging permanent protection of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

The letter, signed by nearly one hundred statewide and national hunting and fishing businesses and organizations urges Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to protect the watershed of the BWCAW from the threat of sulfide-ore copper mining—a dangerous type of mining that has never been done in Minnesota before. Collectively the organizations represent over six million members.

The Boundary Waters helps support 17,000 jobs across the region - in tourism, hospitality, retail and many other industries - and helps drive \$850 million in economic activity. Sulfide-ore mining, widely regarded as one of the most toxic industries in America, has never been done in Minnesota, and certainly not within the Boundary Waters watershed, a mile from a pristine, water-intensive area that is home to America's most-visited wilderness area.

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