



**Media Contact**  
Jeremy Drucker  
jeremy@savetheboundarywaters.org  
(612) 670-9650

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 1, 2016

**Today marks 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of antiquated Twin Metals mining leases adjacent to Boundary Waters wilderness**

*Chilean-owned sulfide-ore copper leases pre-date environmental protection laws; have never undergone environmental review*

Ely, MN—Today marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outdated federal mineral leases on the edge of Minnesota’s iconic Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). These leases, owned by Twin Metals, a subsidiary of the Chilean mining giant Antofagasta, were first issued on June 1, 1966. The leases pre-date environmental protection laws and the law that requires environmental impacts to be considered before decisions are made where mines can be located. Twin Metals proposes to build sulfide-ore copper mines on leased public lands.

“These leases are older than the moon landing,” said National Campaign Chair Becky Rom of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters. “They were issued without any kind of environmental review and recent science shows that sulfide-ore copper mines adjacent to the wilderness would release toxic pollution into a national treasure. The BWCAW watershed is simply the wrong place for this type of mining.”

The lease stage is the only time to evaluate whether a particular location is the right place for an activity. The leases have expired and Twin Metals seeks to renew them in order to develop a massive industrial mining district in the BWCAW watershed. Renewal cannot be allowed without environmental review of potential negative impacts to the BWCAW and surrounding areas.

Sulfide-ore copper mining is part of what the [EPA calls](#) “the most toxic industry in America,” and recent [scientific evidence](#) shows that a mine of this type will pollute the BWCAW even under normal mining operations. In addition, 53 leading scientists in ecology and natural resource-based disciplines signed a [letter](#) expressing deep concern over the proposed mines.

In a [major policy speech](#) in April, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell called on special areas like the BWCAW to be reexamined under modern science in determining whether development should or should not occur. The federal government is currently considering whether to renew Twin Metals’ leases.

### **Ten things younger than the Twin Metals leases**

1. Minnesota North Stars hockey (1967)
2. Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967)
3. The moon landing (1968)
4. National Environmental Policy Act (1970)
5. Watergate (1972)
6. The Clean Water Act (1972)
7. The Clean Air Act (1973)
8. Personal computers (1975)
9. Saturday Night Live (1975)
10. Star Wars (1977)

###

The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters is a broad coalition of more than 30 partner organizations, including conservation, sportsmen, and veteran's groups. The Campaign is also supported by more than 100 local and national businesses. The Campaign is led by Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, which is based in Ely, Minnesota. For more information visit: [SavetheBoundaryWaters.org](http://SavetheBoundaryWaters.org)