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### **Giving America's Favorite Wilderness a Voice**

*The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and surrounding Wilderness edge communities are too valuable to be ruined by proposed sulfide-ore copper mining.*

**Minneapolis, MN (February 3, 2015)** – Ely-area residents, property owners and businesses today prepared to defend the **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness**, America's most visited Wilderness. The Boundary Waters, which draws in 250,000 visitors annually, is threatened by proposed sulfide-ore copper mining operations, such as **Twin Metals**, that would drain pollution into the Wilderness' pristine waters and unspoiled forests. Defenders are especially concerned in light of the catastrophic **Mount Polley** mine tailings basin failure in the summer of 2014.

Representatives from the **Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters** will emphasize the importance of the Boundary Waters to the sustainable tourism and hospitality industry in Northeastern Minnesota, which supports 18,000 jobs and generates \$850 million in revenue annually.

#### **Hearing Time and Location:**

**When:** 2:45-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 3

**Where:** Room 10, State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55155 ([map](#))

**What:** "Informational Hearing on Sulfide Mining" in the Committee on Mining and Outdoor Recreation

Speaking before the **Minnesota House Mining and Outdoor Recreation Committee** on behalf of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters will be **Heather Meier**, whose family owns property on **Eagles Nest Lake**, near Ely, and **Becky Rom**, a third-generation Ely resident. They will explain why the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the surrounding area need protection from sulfide-ore copper mining.

"The number one reason people live in Ely is the Boundary Waters," says Rom. "We enjoy a world-class Wilderness amidst a healthy, well-managed national forest. Large-scale industrial sulfide-ore mining on lands immediately adjacent to the Wilderness will take that all away. The economic damage will begin there but extend to the entire wilderness-edge economy, which is fundamentally based on the Boundary Waters and a healthy national forest."

“Mining companies have acquired 50-year leases from the state to build mines on privately-owned properties in the Eagles Nest Lakes area, including on my family’s home,” says Meier. “My family’s property is at risk of being taken by these mining companies without our consent or fair payment to us. The Eagles Nest Lakes area is located between two popular state parks, and is a beautiful place to live. Our home on Eagles Nest Lake is my family’s legacy. I had always hoped to make it my full-time home, but mines will drive me away, just as it will drive off others. This spectacular area would become a mining zone, leaving nothing for the community after we leave.”

Speakers will describe the unique and valuable assets of the Boundary Waters:

- The Boundary Waters encompasses 1.1 million acres of the 3-million acre **Superior National Forest**. Twenty percent of all fresh water in the entire **National Forest** system is in the **Superior National Forest**.
- Twenty-six resorts, camps and campgrounds, and private property worth many hundreds of millions of dollars, are located on the Wilderness edge of the Boundary Waters.

Save the Boundary Waters presenters will also underscore that sulfide-ore copper mining has never before been permitted in Minnesota and has never succeeded at being pollution-free.

- Sulfide-ore copper mining sites proposed by Twin Metals, among others, are upstream from the Wilderness. The toxic pollution from these sulfide-ore mines would drain into and pollute the lakes and rivers in the Boundary Waters
- The catastrophic failure of the tailings basin at the Mount Polley mine in British Columbia in the summer of 2014 shows the damage of copper mining disasters. Mount Polley poured 1.2 billion gallons of potentially toxic sludge into miles of streams and lakes in the heart of an immensely valuable sockeye salmon spawning area. **AMEC**, the second engineering company of record for the failed Mount Polley tailings basin, has worked extensively on the proposed Twin Metals mine.

“Visitors to the Boundary Waters are asked to leave no trace,” says Rom. “Mining companies are unable to prove they can do the same. To keep the Boundary Waters permanently protected, sulfide-ore copper mining cannot happen within its watershed.”

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Save the Boundary Waters is a broad-based campaign led by **Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness**, which is based in Ely, Minnesota. For more information, contact Communications Director **Ellie M. Bayrd** at [ellie@savetheboundarywaters.org](mailto:ellie@savetheboundarywaters.org) and (612) 616-2149.