

Public land, hunting advocates lobbying moderates to kill pro-mining resolution

By **HANNAH NORTHEY** | 01/21/2026 06:55 AM EST

Hook and bullet groups want to quash legislation to allow mining near Minnesota's Boundary Waters.



The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in the Superior National Forest in Minnesota. Forest Service/Interior Department/Flickr

Public land and hunting advocates angling to kill Republican Rep. Pete Stauber's push to reverse a mining ban near Minnesota's pristine Boundary Waters are hoping to sway House moderates.

The group Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is urging lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to reject [H.J. Res. 140](#), which would overturn the Biden administration's 20-year withdrawal of 225,000 acres in the Superior National Forest near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from new mining.

Stauber introduced the resolution under the rule-killing Congressional Review Act, which has never been used to repeal a presidential mineral withdrawal.

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"There are cooler, calmer heads in the middle that are thinking this isn't of national importance, it's not an immediate need, why right now," Ryan Callaghan, the group's CEO, told POLITICO's E&E News.

Callaghan stressed that his members include people in extractive industries and the group doesn't oppose mining. Many advocates have said the Boundary Waters deserve special protection.

But they may have a tough time convincing pro-mining Republicans poised to vote on the resolution as early as Wednesday.

During a House Rules Committee hearing on Tuesday to set parameters for debate, GOP Rep. Brian Jack of Georgia applauded Stauber for building a "strong coalition in support," while Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-N.Y.) said allowing mining in the Superior National Forest would help reduce U.S. reliance on other countries.

Stauber and the Trump administration are eager to see Twin Metals, a subsidiary of Chilean mining firm Antofagasta, advance the Twin Metals copper-nickel-cobalt mining project in northeastern Minnesota, which would be located about 5 miles away from the Boundary Waters. The wilderness covers more than 1 million acres, includes more than 1,000 lakes and spans 150 miles along the U.S.-Canada border.

Activists hoping to quash the resolution are eyeing the bipartisan House Public Lands Caucus, co-chaired by Montana Republican Ryan Zinke who fought last year against proposed public land sales.

"Created to help shield America's public lands and waters from dangerous ideas in Congress, [H.J. Res.140] is exactly the kind of proposal they must work together to stop," said [an op-ed](#) in the Billings Gazette by Callaghan and Steven Rinella, founder of MeatEater, which produces pro-hunting and -fishing media.



Ryan Callaghan. | Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

But Zinke is whipping colleagues to support Stauber's legislation, something Callaghan called disappointing.

Heather Swift, Zinke's chief of staff, said the congressman has been clear about his position on projects like Twin Metals.

"The mine is a good project with a strong safety plan and the palladium group metals that will be mined there are critical for national security, green energy, and tech security," said Swift.

Stauber on Tuesday said the legislation would not approve any mining project. And dozens of industry, labor and other groups released a letter supporting the legislation.

"We collectively support the use of the Congressional Review Act to overturn the mineral withdrawal currently under consideration in Congress, as it is an essential step forward in unlocking the resources that our nation needs to reduce our dangerous reliance on China and other adversarial nations," the [groups wrote](#).

The Congressional Review Act makes it easier for Congress to undo newly issued rules by simple majority. The Trump administration submitted the withdrawal as a rule so lawmakers could undo it. Republicans in particular have long been looking to expand the CRA's reach.

"These actions are unprecedented and will, without a doubt, cause chaos and invite lengthy and costly litigation," said Rep. Emily Randall (D-Wash.).

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