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Hunting and angling businesses and organizations, representing over 6 million members, urge permanent protection for Minnesota’s Boundary Waters Wilderness

On the day the US Forest Service (USFS) is holding a second public listening session in Ely, MN to gather input on whether the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Areas Wilderness is the right place for sulfide-ore copper mining, Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters released a [letter](#) signed by nearly hundred hunting and angling businesses and organizations urging permanent protection of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

The letter urges Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to protect the watershed of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (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 Wilderness is one of the best places to hunt and fish in the entire world,” said Dave Zenter, former National Chair of the Izaak Walton League of America and northeastern Minnesota resident. “Proposed sulfide-ore copper mining on its very edge would have a devastating impact on this world-class outdoors experience and the local economies that rely upon this fragile wilderness. The US Forest Service should listen to concerns of the hunting and angling community and not consent to renew the Twin Metals leases.”

Recent polling shows [two-thirds of Minnesotans](#) do not want sulfide-ore copper mining near the BWCAW—including over 60 percent in Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District — which includes the Iron Range and Duluth.

The letter specifically asks Secretaries Jewell and Vilsack to deny the renewal of two currently expired mineral leases, held by Twin Metals Minnesota and their South American parent company, the Chilean mining giant Antofagasta. It also asks them to use their existing authority, guided by the best available science, to remove the watershed of the Boundary Waters from the federal mining program and take any other actions necessary to support this special place.

Over the last year and a half dozens of national and statewide hunting, fishing and outdoors organizations have joined the campaign to save Minnesota’s Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) from the threat of sulfide-ore copper mining. These include:

- The American Sportfishing Association

- National Wildlife Federation
- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Pope and Young Club
- Izaak Walton League of America

Iconic brands such as Rapala lures and St. Croix rods have also lent their support.

November the federal Wildlife Hunting and Conservation Council that advises the President on outdoors issues sent a [letter](#) to Secretaries Jewell and Vilsack urging them to protect the BWCAW.

Pollution from these mines would flow into the Boundary Waters as well as impact Voyageurs National Park - which help drive the economy of Northeastern Minnesota and supports [nearly 17,000 jobs and brings \\$850 million](#) in economic activity annually to the region. The Boundary Waters and Voyageurs are also significant contributors to Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy, which generates [\\$11.6 billion in consumer spending and 118,000 direct jobs statewide](#). The economic health of local communities in northeastern Minnesota depends on the clean water, productive forests, and healthy fisheries and game populations of the Boundary Waters.

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