

To the U.S. Forest Service:

We urge you to take all actions necessary to protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park and to prevent sulfide-ore copper mining in the headwaters of these national treasures.

Sulfide-ore copper mining in the Rainy River Drainage Basin, the headwaters of the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs National park, would cause permanent damage to the nation's most visited Wilderness and a world-class hunting and fishing destination. This damage is inevitable; modern technology and mining operations cannot prevent the irreversible harm to this ecosystem. Minnesota's largest tract of public lands and waters need comprehensive review and anything less is unacceptable. It's up to us to defend our public lands, waters and sporting heritage.

We urge you to do the following:

1. Prepare a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement that thoroughly studies the devastating impacts of sulfide-ore copper mining on Superior National Forest lands in the Rainy River Drainage Basin that will irreversibly affect habitat, wildlife, hunting and fishing opportunities and the thriving local economy. Provide the scientific, economic, and social basis for the proposed ban of 234,328 acres of Superior National Forest lands. Document why only a removal of these lands from the federal mineral leasing program can protect the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs.
2. Submit a strong recommendation to Interior Secretary Zinke asking that the Department of Interior order the proposed ban of 234,328 acres of Superior National Forest lands from the federal mineral leasing program for 20 years, the maximum period allowed by law.