



Friday, April 26th, 2024

Dear United States Representative,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, representing tens of millions of members and supporters from across the country, we respectfully request that you oppose H.R. 3195, to overturn Public Land Order 7917—the Biden administration’s science-based 20-year mining ban in the watershed of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park. It is critical for elected officials like you to lead the fight to protect the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs NP by opposing this harmful, unpopular legislation.

H.R. 3195 also automatically reissues canceled mineral leases to Chilean mining giant Antofagasta without review, places an arbitrary and truncated 18 month review on any future permitting or leasing review, and blocks any judicial review of future permits and leases within the watershed of the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs. This sets a dangerous precedent on public lands and the conservation of America's most sensitive ecosystems.

H.R. 3195 puts America’s most popular wilderness at risk by opening the headwaters of the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs to sulfide-ore copper mining—a destructive and poisonous type of mining that has never been done before in Minnesota. The U.S. Forest Service released an Environmental Assessment comprising all the available science, economics, public health, and public opinion, and found that this type of mining would cause irreversible damage to the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs NP and proposed a 20-year mineral withdrawal on federal lands and minerals in the watershed.

Since 2015, numerous polls—from firms used by both Former President Trump and President Biden—have found that Minnesota voters overwhelmingly support protecting the Boundary Waters from sulfide-ore copper mining. In what we all recognize as a highly polarized political climate, finding an issue that has this level of consistent support over the span of multiple years, through major events like the pandemic and economic uncertainty, and genuinely cuts across party lines, is extremely rare.

These efforts to undo the Department of Interior’s ban on sulfide-ore copper mining go directly against the robust science, favorable public opinion, and the sound legal basis of Secretary Haaland’s decision. Considering this legislation also sets a very dangerous precedent for our nation’s cherished places.

The state of Minnesota has denied a key component of a proposed Twin Metals mine plan by rejecting use of state land for tailings storage. There is no other realistic storage option because of the abundance of public lands in the Boundary Waters headwaters. This means that Twin Metals has no viable mine plan. Although this bill attempts to grant our nation’s natural resources in this region to a single foreign mining company, the reality is that the bill is a fool’s errand and not a serious bill.

Protecting the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs is the right thing to do. This beloved place deserves the protections set out by the Biden administration which should be made permanent through an Act of Congress (H.R. 668). Our groups stand by to support you in opposing H.R. 3195 and ensuring the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs can be protected for all generations to come.

Sincerely,

6th Woodrunners OSG	Lynn Canal Conservation
Alliance for Sustainability	Malach Consulting
Apex Protection Project	Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance	MN350 Action
Californians for Western Wilderness	National Ocean Protection Coalition
Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters	Natural Resources Defense Council
Center for Biological Diversity	New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
Clean Water Action Minnesota	Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Conservation Colorado	Okanogan Highlands Alliance
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship	Oregon League of Conservation Voters
Deer Tail Scientific (Duluth, MN)	Sierra Club
Earthjustice	Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Earthworks	The Wilderness Society
Endangered Species Coalition	Urban Bird Collective
Environment America	WaterLegacy
Environmental Protection Information Center- EPIC	Weber Sustainability Consulting
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas	Western Environmental Law Center
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness	Wild Montana
Friends of the Earth US	Wilderness Watch
Friends of Wisconsin Wolf and Wildlife	Wilderness Workshop
Great Basin Resource Watch	Wisconsin Mining Action Network
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance	YMCA Camp Icahowan
GreenLatinos	YMCA Camp Menogyn
Indigenous Environmental Network	YMCA Camp Northern Lights
League of Conservation Voters	YMCA Camp Warren
Lutefisk Technologies, Inc.	YMCA Camp Widjiwagan