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Comments:

I am against any new rules or regulations that would make it easier for big companies to do drilling to find mineral deposits in or near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. I am including in my comments a letter written by Susan Schurke. Susan and her husband Paul Schurke are well-known business people in our area having founded Wintergreen Northern Wear, and Paul is an internationally known Arctic explorer. Both are very concerned about preserving the BWCAW for generations to come.

Dear U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross,

Thank you for visiting with my husband Paul and me at the White House. We were deeply honored that our outdoor apparel manufacturing company, Wintergreen Northern Wear, of Ely was selected by the White House to represent our state at the 2018 Made in America Product Showcase.

Enclosed please find a copy of the Duluth News Tribune that highlighted our visit with a photo of you and me at our Wintergreen display.

At our booth, we were pleased to share with congresspeople, White House staff, and others who visited data you released last February from the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis documenting what a powerful economic engine the outdoor industry has become.

As you said upon releasing your report, "The public will no doubt be surprised at the economic importance of this industry." Indeed, your report noted that the outdoor industry including recreation, gear, and clothing contributes nearly \$373 billion annually to the national economy. That figure is 2 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product, or GDP. This puts the outdoor industry ahead of farming, forestry and fishing (which accounts for 1 percent of GDP) and also ahead of mining, oil, and gas extraction (at 1.4 percent). Our industry provides 7.6 million jobs, ahead of construction (7.6 million) and computer technology (6.7 million).

Not only does our outdoor industry contribute much more to the national economy than either agriculture or extractive industries, it's also growing much faster than the overall economy, as your report noted. That's great news for the 140,000 of us in Minnesota with jobs in our state's \$16.7 billion outdoor industry.

Our outdoor industry depends on America's public lands, and we're pleased your cabinet colleague, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, is now promising a more enlightened approach toward the protection of this precious national resource. Thank you for supporting him in the pivot he announced in June toward conservation. We are heartened by his new commitment to increasing America's wildlife populations, conserving wildlife corridors, and expanding outdoor recreational opportunity.

It's often said America's national parks were our nation's best idea. That sentiment can be extended to all of our public lands, including Minnesota's beloved Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, the most heavily visited wilderness in our country. Public lands and the recreational opportunities they provide are not only great for our national health and well-being, they support a huge outdoor industry which, as your recent report revealed for the first time ever, is critical to American jobs and our economy.

Susan Hendrickson-Schurke is a founder and owner of Wintergreen Northern Wear LLC in Ely, which represented Minnesota at a made-in-America event at the White House on July 23.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Jane Gilbert-Howard