

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

May 17, 2024

Mr. Tom Hall
Forest Supervisor, Superior National Forest
U.S. Forest Service
8901 Grand Avenue Place
Duluth, MN 55808

RE: BWCAW Forest Plan Amendment

Dear Supervisor Hall:

Since its establishment as a national forest by Presidential Proclamation by President Theodore Roosevelt on February 13, 1909, the Superior National Forest has been a crown jewel of Northern Minnesota. Over the past 115 years, the forest has played an incredibly important role in the lives of generations of Minnesotans. Over this period, the forest has played a pivotal role in our way of life, serving not only as an area where Minnesotans can recreate and enjoy the beautiful, natural landscapes, but also as an important working, industrial forest critical to the Northern Minnesota economy.

As you and your team begin crafting a forest plan amendment addressing the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), I urge you to keep two things in mind:

1. No action should be taken or policy should be implemented that limits the public's access to any part of the Superior National Forest (both within and outside of the wilderness area) including the use of snowmobiles, boats, or other motorized vehicles.
2. No action should be taken or policy should be implemented that changes the forest's status and character as a working, industrial forest.

The Superior National Forest has been a working forest for the entirety of its 115-year history. It plays a significant role in the regional economy of the Iron Range, both relating to responsible timber harvesting and responsible mining.

During debate over the 1964 Wilderness Act that created the BWCAW, along with the 1978 Boundary Waters Wilderness Act that expanded the BWCAW, it was made abundantly clear—the Superior National Forest is and shall always remain a working industrial forest. During consideration of both measures, leaders in Congress made it abundantly clear that responsible timber harvesting and mining activity will and should always continue to occur outside of the BWCAW and the buffer zone. This belief was not only held by the Congressional leaders who

drafted both acts but was also widely held by citizens of the Iron Range and other areas across Northern Minnesota.

Today, the current forest plan lists both timber harvesting and mining as “desired traits” for the forest. It is incumbent that you and the leadership of the U.S. Forest Service keep these policies in place and ensure that responsible industrial activity—including timber harvesting and mining—remain desired traits in the forest plan. I strongly urge you not to include any provisions in your forthcoming draft forest plan amendment that would mark a departure from this.

I appreciate your attention to this issue. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Shawn Rusterholz in my Washington, DC office (shawn.rusterholz@mail.house.gov / 202-225-6211).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pete Stauber", with a stylized, cursive script.

Pete Stauber
Member of Congress