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Organization: Range Association of Municipalities and Schools

Title: Executive Director

Comments: On behalf of the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS), representing over 153,000 residents of the 27 cities, 27 townships, and 15 school districts in the 13,000 square mile region of Northeastern Minnesota, I would like to indicate our concern for the proposed management changes to the Wilderness Chapter amendment of the Forest Plan to the Superior National Forest Plan.

Our communities value the sustainability of this resource for its intrinsic value, as well as its complete offerings to our residents: natural beauty, tourism, forestry, and mining. These attributes are not and must not be considered mutually exclusive. Except for the January 2023 mineral withdrawal, we believe the current regulations are adequate.

It is imperative that the Superior National Forest remain a working forest. The public good is not served by restricting access to timber or mineral estate. Expanding restrictions to areas surrounding the Forest would limit our ability to participate in meeting our Green New Deal commitments. It would also limit our ability to produce the infrastructure materials necessary to successfully navigate the energy transition.

A healthy, working forest benefits everyone.

Sincerely,

Paul Peltier

Executive Director

Range Association of Municipalities and Schools