

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/1/2018 3:23:47 AM

First name: Doug & Nancy

Last name: McReady

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Department of the Interior should immediately abandon the unnecessary and illegal withdrawal proposal. The overreach of the Obama Administration at the direction of anti-mining preservation groups had no input on this land withdrawal from state, county or communities that would be affected. The USFS has already recognized there are no significant environmental impacts from the withdrawal proposal.

Agencies must provide the needed resources to expedite its completion and address reasonable alternatives, including a legitimate no action alternative. There has been no baseline of present sulfide established in area lakes, rivers or streams near or in the Boundary Waters from natural causes. How do you determine future harm without this data?

If an EA moves forward it must not only identify federal mineral potential, it must also include state and private mineral potential within the withdrawal boundaries. State and private minerals are distributed throughout the Superior National Forest and the withdrawal would effectively preclude any development of these state and private minerals. The total impact of the proposed withdrawal is approximately 425,000 acres of lands and minerals.

Agencies must consider the socio-economic concerns associated with withdrawal on the state, region, and individual communities. The socio-economic concerns must also be included as part of the ultimate decision-making. The human factor must be put back into land management policies. The needs of local communities and all users can and must be balanced with the conservation of sensitive natural environments. Common Sense is needed in addressing economic development for the betterment of all.

There must be the use of common sense, the best available scientific data, objective analysis, and broad public input on the part of government agencies and elected officials when making and implementing land management and environmental policies.

If the EA moves forward it should make clear that the USFS has already acknowledged that leasing of federal minerals and mineral exploration activities have no significant impact on the environment. The 2012 Hardrock Prospect Permit EIS found no significant impacts on the environment from exploration, and the current Superior National Forest Management Plan lists mineral development as a desired condition.

The EA must acknowledge the importance of precious metals independence for the United States where we can mine safely with regard to our environment. Minnesota has some of the strictest pollution regulations, whereas other countries have very few if any regulations. In addition, our mine workers follow MSHA regulations for safety and we do not use child laborers in unsafe conditions.

The EA should acknowledge that any future specific mineral development project proposal will be required to undergo extensive environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act, and this is the appropriate process for protecting environment.

The withdrawal is in direct conflict with President Trump's December 20, 2017, Executive Order on domestic production of minerals and the U.S. Geological Survey 2017 report highlighting the future need and source of critical minerals.