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Comments: I am writing to support the Forest Service's proposal to protect the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness and surrounding watershed by withdrawing the proposed federal land within the Rainy River watershed from mineral leasing and exploration and thus making it off-limits to sulfide-ore copper mining over the next 20 years. The Rainy River watershed surface waters flow north through the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness, Voyageurs National Park, and portions of the Superior National Forest so any negative impacts of mining activity would impact these state and national treasures. I strongly urge the Forest Service to complete a comprehensive environmental impact statement given the scale of the mining project to ensure the health of the ecosystem and communities is maintained. Peer-reviewed research indicates that underground sulfide mining pollution would quickly move into surface water and the geology of the BWCA can't buffer acid mine drainage lending to significant risk to one of the most visited wilderness areas in America. Historic experiences with mining nationwide have documented unreliable economic promises that rarely create the economic impacts that the companies promise. The positive economic benefit of tourism in the Boundary Water Canoe Area outweighs the economic impact that a Chile-based international company will bring to the state with the anticipated employment of 650 individuals. I strongly urge the state to withdraw the proposed federal lands from mineral leasing and to conduct a comprehensive environmental review to determine the risks on these incredible, pristine wilderness areas so they can be enjoyed for generations.

Much appreciated,

Carissa