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Comments: Like hopefully many others, I'm writing to urge you to support a federal purchase of school trust lands within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in the Superior National Forest in Minnesota, and the 3,200 acres of St. Louis County land included in the land purchase package.

I've learned that the issue goes back to Minnesota statehood in 1858, when the federal government granted two sections of land in every township (sections 16 and 36) to the State to support education. Elsewhere in Minnesota, these school trust lands were often sold, and the proceeds deposited in the state's Permanent School Fund that supports education. In other places, revenues from mineral exploration and mining permits, and timber sales on school trust lands also went into the Permanent School Fund.

A federal purchase will increase the efficiency of administering and protecting the BWCAW as a Wilderness, and prevent future state or county governments from developing these lands. It would also provide far more income to Minnesota's Permanent School Fund than would a land exchange, according to analyses by the local Timberjay newspaper and others. And counter to the the assertions of a few local legislators, a federal purchase is perfectly legal under the Weeks Act. As you may know, Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund for just such purposes.

Thank you for your consideration.