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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to express my strong support for the federal purchase of the 80,000 acres of state school trust lands within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and the 3,200 acres of St. Louis County land included in the proposed land purchase package.

A federal acquisition of these lands would significantly enhance the efficiency of administering and protecting the BWCAW as a designated Wilderness Area. By integrating these parcels into the BWCAW, we can safeguard the integrity of this unique and ecologically sensitive area from potential future developments by state or county governments.

Furthermore, a federal purchase represents a more advantageous financial outcome for Minnesota's Permanent School Fund compared to a land exchange. Analyses conducted by the local Timberjay newspaper and other credible sources have demonstrated that a direct purchase would yield greater long-term revenue for the Fund, ensuring continued support for Minnesota's educational needs.

Contrary to the concerns raised by some local legislators, the federal acquisition of these lands is fully compliant with the Weeks Act, which provides the legal framework for such transactions. Additionally, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, established by Congress specifically for purposes like this, is an appropriate and well-established mechanism for facilitating the purchase of conservation lands.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important matter. I strongly believe that the federal purchase of these lands is in the best interest of both the BWCAW and Minnesota's Permanent School Fund.