

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/11/2024 11:35:40 PM

First name: Robert

Last name: Helvie

Organization:

Title:

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

This federal acquisition is not just beneficial, but crucial for the future of the BWCAW. It will significantly enhance the efficiency of administering and protecting this pristine wilderness area, while safeguarding it against potential development by future state or county governments. The importance of preserving this unique ecosystem cannot be overstated.

Contrary to claims made by some local legislators, I must emphasize that this federal purchase is entirely legal under the Weeks Act. Moreover, it is precisely the type of acquisition for which Congress established the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It is imperative that we utilize these legal mechanisms to protect our natural heritage.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that this federal purchase will generate substantially more income for Minnesota's Permanent School Fund compared to a land exchange. This fact has been thoroughly documented by analyses conducted by the local Timberjay newspaper and other reputable sources. We cannot ignore the financial benefits this purchase will bring to our state's educational system.

I INSIST you move forward with this purchase without delay. The BWCAW is a national treasure that deserves our utmost protection and care. This acquisition represents a rare opportunity to strengthen its preservation while also benefiting our state's schools.

Your swift action on this matter is both necessary and appreciated.