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Comments: I strongly support this land purchase for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). It achieves three crucial objectives:

1. Preservation of Public Lands: This purchase prevents a potential land swap that could have reduced the size of the Superior National Forest. Maintaining these lands under federal protection ensures their conservation for future generations. It also preserves public access.
2. Expansion of Public Access: As part of this agreement, an additional 17,000 acres of land outside the Boundary Waters, currently held by The Conservation Fund, will also be acquired. This expansion of public land within the Superior National Forest will enhance access for all citizens, providing increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and appreciation of Minnesota's natural heritage.
3. Resolution of Historical Conflicts: This purchase resolves long-standing issues regarding School Trust Lands within the BWCAW. The School Trust has previously sold land and can use the proceeds from this purchase to invest as needed. This resolution maintains the integrity of the Wilderness area while addressing the economic interests of the School Trust.

In conclusion, this land purchase represents a significant step forward in land conservation, public access, and conflict resolution. It serves the best interests of both the environment and the public, and I urge its approval.