

January 16, 2026

The Hon. Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Hakeem Jeffries  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, and Members of the House of Representatives:

On behalf of the 80 undersigned organizations and their millions of members, we respectfully urge you to vote NO on House Joint Resolution 140, which would revoke critical protections for the watershed of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness—one of the nation's most visited and expansive wilderness areas.

The Boundary Waters and downstream Voyageurs National Park are currently protected by Public Land Order 7917, the 20-year mineral withdrawal banning copper mining on federal public lands in the headwaters of these beloved wild lands. This mineral withdrawal was based on the U.S. Forest Service's comprehensive Environmental Assessment, which concluded that sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters would cause irreversible harm to the ecosystem and downstream Voyageurs National Park. The analysis completed by the Forest Service in 2022 included 675,000 public comments, over 95% of which favored protecting the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs from sulfide-ore copper mining.

In early January, this Public Land Order (7917) was challenged under the Congressional Review Act (CRA), despite Public Land Orders having never been deemed a rule subject to the law. Instead, statutory requirements for Public Land Orders have always been dictated by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act of 1976. Using the CRA to attack these protections also creates a reckless precedent that would allow Congress to retroactively target virtually any public land action as a 'rule.'

Beyond setting a dangerous precedent, removing Boundary Waters protections by passing this CRA would blatantly ignore the voices of the American people and prioritize the profits of a foreign mining company - Chilean conglomerate Antofagasta - over the interest of this nation's citizenry and beloved public lands. Once compromised, the Boundary Waters cannot be restored. This region is much more than a beautiful place. It embodies the best of our public lands: clean water, expansive habitat, world-class recreation, and a strong, sustainable local economy. Generations of Midwesterners and Americans from across the country have formed deep connections to nature through hunting, fishing, camping, canoeing, and hiking in the Boundary Waters.

Allowing copper mining to proceed by overturning the mineral withdrawal puts at risk not only the environment but also the regional economy. The outdoor recreation economy in northeastern Minnesota supports over 17,000 jobs and contributes more than \$1 billion in annual sales. Studies consistently show that protecting the Boundary Waters generates stronger and more sustainable economic benefits than short term and toxic sulfide-ore copper mining.

We urge you to vote no on H.J.R. 140. Do not sell out our wilderness and public lands against the will of Americans who want these special places preserved.

Sincerely,

Alaska Wilderness League	Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance (ABRA)	Healthy Ocean Coalition
American Bird Conservancy	Inland Ocean Coalition
American Hunters & Anglers	Izaak Walton League of America
Big Mountain Dreams	John Muir Project
BlueGreen Generation	League of Conservation Voters
Bolder Options	Living Rivers Colorado Riverkeeper
Californians for Western Wilderness	Lutefisk Technologies, Inc.
Cascade Forest Conservancy	MN Center for Environmental Advocacy
Center for Biological Diversity	mtn bio
Change the Chamber	National Parks Conservation Association
Clean Water Action Minnesota	Natural Resources Defense Council
Colorado Mountain Club	Nebraska Division IWLA
Colorado Wild Public Lands	New Mexico Wild
Conservation Colorado	New York State Division IWLA
Conservation Lands Foundation	Next 100 Coalition
Conservation Minnesota	Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment
Conservation Northwest	Ocean Defense Initiative
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship	Ohio Division IWLA
Crow River Trail Guards	One Mississippi
CURE	Outdoor Alliance
Earthjustice Action	Presbyterians for Earth Care
Earthworks	Quiet Use Coalition
EcoFlight	Rivers Without Borders
Elders Climate Action	Rocky Mountain Wild
Endangered Species Coalition	San Juan Citizens Alliance
Environment America	Sanitas Sales Group
Environment Minnesota	Save Lake Superior Association
Environmental Action	Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Environmental Law & Policy Center	Save the Boundary Waters
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness	Sheep Mountain Alliance
Giniw Collective	Sierra Club

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance  
Standing Trees  
Student Public Interest Research Groups  
The Conservation Alliance  
The Wilderness Society  
Vet Voice Foundation  
Voyageurs Conservancy  
Washington Wild  
WaterLegacy  
West Virginia Division IWLA  
Western Slope Conservation Center  
Western Watersheds Project  
Wild Montana  
Wilderness Watch  
Wilderness Workshop  
Wisconsin Division IWLA