

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  
Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance (ABRA)  
American Bird Conservancy  
American Hunters & Anglers  
Big Mountain Dreams  
BlueGreen Generation  
Bolder Options  
Californians for Western Wilderness  
Cascade Forest Conservancy  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Change the Chamber  
Clean Water Action Minnesota  
Colorado Mountain Club  
Colorado Wild Public Lands  
Conservation Colorado  
Conservation Lands Foundation  
Conservation Minnesota  
Conservation Northwest  
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship  
Crow River Trail Guards  
CURE  
Earthjustice Action  
Earthworks  
EcoFlight  
Elders Climate Action  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Environment Minnesota  
Environmental Action  
Environmental Law & Policy Center  
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness  
Giniw Collective

Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Healthy Ocean Coalition  
Inland Ocean Coalition  
Izaak Walton League of America  
John Muir Project  
League of Conservation Voters  
Living Rivers Colorado Riverkeeper  
Lutefisk Technologies, Inc.  
MN Center for Environmental Advocacy  
mtn bio  
National Parks Conservation Association  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nebraska Division IWLA  
New Mexico Wild  
New York State Division IWLA  
Next 100 Coalition  
Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment  
Ocean Defense Initiative  
Ohio Division IWLA  
One Mississippi  
Outdoor Alliance  
Presbyterians for Earth Care  
Quiet Use Coalition  
Rivers Without Borders  
Rocky Mountain Wild  
San Juan Citizens Alliance  
Sanitas Sales Group  
Save Lake Superior Association  
Save Our Sky Blue Waters  
Save the Boundary Waters  
Sheep Mountain Alliance  
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