

January 2020

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of thousands of kids, teens, young adults, and “kids at heart” across the country, we are writing to ask that you support permanent protection of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and watershed from harmful sulfide-ore copper mining on its border.

Located in Northeastern Minnesota, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is truly an American treasure. It is 1.1 million acres of pristine interconnected lakes and rivers embedded in the Superior National Forest, contiguous with Ontario’s Quetico Wilderness. The BWCA is our nation’s most visited wilderness, and the largest wilderness east of the Rockies. It houses twenty percent of the freshwater in the National Forest System. More than 150,000 people visit every year and they all leave having felt the power of the wilderness.

Over the past two years Kids for the Boundary Waters has taken more than a hundred kids, teens and young adults to Washington, D.C. to advocate on behalf of the Boundary Waters. Every one of them took time out of their school year or summer to come, and each of them has brought with a powerful connection to the area and reason for wanting to protect it. For some, the BWCA has been a place of physical healing, to recover from illnesses, cancers, and injuries. For others it has been a place to heal psychologically and emotionally from depression and trauma. And for some it is simply a place of quiet, solitude, and peace. As we say up north, a place to “be where your feet are”. No matter the reason for entering the wilderness, we all have come out changed, sometimes significantly, and always for the better.

Kids for the Boundary Waters is committed to preserving the wilderness, not only for ourselves, but for all those who have not yet had the chance to experience it. We want the Boundary Waters to be accessible to everyone, indefinitely. This is our future, our fight, our wilderness, and whatever mess is left behind by shortsighted and ill-formed plans to mine the area will be ours to clean up. We need your help.

On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters across the country, we, the undersigned, urge you to cosponsor HR 5598, the Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection and Pollution Act, introduced by U.S. Representatives Betty McCollum (D-MN), Francis Rooney (R-FL), Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), Fred Upton (R-MI), Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), and Dean Phillips (D-MN). This important bipartisan legislation would permanently protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and its headwaters in the Superior National Forest from harmful mineral extraction that would irreparably pollute this pristine watershed for centuries.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Goldstein
President, Kids for the Boundary Waters

Theresa Pierno
President, NPCA

Liese Dart
Eastern Region Philanthropy Officer and Strategic Advisor, The Wilderness Society

Ann McNally
Northern Lakes Girl Scouts Canoe Base
Ely, MN

Robbie Bond
President, Kids Speak for Parks

JR Verkamp
Executive Director, Camp Koochiching
International Falls, MN

Matt Poppleton
Executive Director, YMCA Camp Widjiwagan
Ely, MN

Meghan Cosgrove
Executive Director, YMCA Camp Menogyn
Ely, MN

Niki Geisler
District Executive, YMCA Camps Du Nord and Northern Lights
Ely, MN