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February 1, 2020

1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Committee of Natural Resources
Subcommittee of Energy and Mineral Resources

Dear Subcommittee:

I am writing to the Subcommittee to ask for your support for H. R. 5598 at the hearing on February 5, 2020. This bill would protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness ("BWCA") from the threat of copper-sulfide mining.

The BWCA consists of more than a million acres of wilderness with nearly 2,000 pristine lakes along the international border between Minnesota and Canada. Copper-sulfide mining is proposed on federal lands in the Superior National Forest adjacent to the BWCA. In 2016, the U.S. Forest Service determined that copper-sulfide mining within the same watershed as the BWCA posed an unacceptable risk to this unique wilderness area. To address this risk, H. R. 5598 would prevent copper-sulfide mining from 234,328 acres of land adjacent to the BWCA. H. R. 5598 was introduced by Congresswoman Betty McCollum and has been referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

I am an eighteen-year-old high school student from Minnesota. The BWCA has had a profound effect on my life and has been especially impactful the past couple of years. I could go on forever about the BWCA and its many amazing aspects. However, one thing I want to share with the Subcommittee are the stars.

I often forget how amazing a night sky can be. Looking up from my house on a clear night I can see a small amount of distant stars. But when I look at the night sky in the BWCA I am reminded of the brightness and true power that stars can have, the kind of power that takes your breath away. I specifically remember waking up late one night with my friends from camp. We all went outside to lie down on the ground. There was complete silence except for a slight wind as we stared up. Unlike the dim sky I see outside my home, I was able to see shooting stars, constellations, and the Milky Way, all of which felt close enough to reach out and touch. In this moment I felt a sense of peace, one I find that only the BWCA seems to give me. All the stress I had about things at home seemed to melt away; it was as though the vastness of the stars gave me perspective on my life. The night sky and the friends surrounding me were simply enough to put my mind at ease. Knowing the impact that just the night sky had on me, I can't imagine the impact that this amazing wilderness area could have on others. So many people

have yet to experience the Boundary Waters; it would be a shame to let a copper-sulfide mine rob future generations of this potential.

I would like to thank Mr. Grijalva, Mr. Rooney, Mr. Lowenthal, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Upton for their support and helping introduce this bill with Congresswoman Betty McCollum.

Sincerely,
Claire Knopf

I would love to discuss this issue more and the importance of the BWCA. Feel free to contact me at anytime at 651-483-1589 or email me at clairefknopf@gmail.com.