

critical technology areas, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. RICKETTS. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 2066) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

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#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2026

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in recess until 10 a.m. on Thursday, April 16; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate resume consideration of H.J. Res. 140, and that at 11 a.m., all time be expired on the joint resolution, it be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage; and that following disposition, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of Calendar No. 671, Andrew Davis, and notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture at 1:45 p.m.; further, that if cloture is invoked, all time be expired and the Senate vote on confirmation at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader no earlier than Monday, April 20.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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#### ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. RICKETTS. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand in recess under the previous order following the remarks of Senator SMITH.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

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#### H.J. RES. 140

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise tonight thinking about my beloved Minnesota and thinking about all of the people in Minnesota and around the country that love the Boundary Waters.

And I want to talk for a while about the Congressional Review Act resolution—this is H.J. Res. 140—that is before us tonight, and I want to speak directly to my colleagues about the CRA and why I think it is so important that we vote no on this CRA.

So what this CRA would do is it would roll back protections for the Boundary Waters Wilderness, which is

in Northeastern Minnesota. This is a picture of just one of the many glorious scenes of what you find in the Boundary Waters, which I will be talking about more this evening. This CRA, as I said, would roll back protections for the Boundary Waters Wilderness in Northeastern Minnesota. What it would do is it would allow copper sulfide mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters, and this would be devastating to the wilderness.

The decision that this body makes will have long-term implications for the Boundary Waters, and it will also have long-term implications for how we protect public lands around this country going forward.

So I want to start with the core point that Minnesota is a mining State. We support mining—just not mining in this place. Minnesota is a mining and natural resources State. Mining is so important to our economy. We are proud to be the No. 1 source of iron ore in the whole country, and we produced three-quarters of the iron that went into the tanks and planes that led us to victory in World War II. And we are still producing most of the Nation's iron ore today.

And it is also true that there are other potential mines currently under consideration and development in Minnesota—not iron ore mines but other mines—that would produce copper and nickel.

Responsible mining is an economic driver in our State. It is part of our history, and it is part of our future.

So why oppose this CRA? Why would we oppose this CRA, which, I will tell you, will pave the way for developing a copper sulfide mine right on the doorstep of the Boundary Waters?

Well, I want to start this discussion tonight by giving three simple and basic reasons. The first is that this is an incredibly special place, beloved by Minnesotans and beloved by people all around the country, and this mine poses an unacceptable threat to this place.

The Boundary Waters, if the Presiding Officer has not been there, is a million acres of lakes and bogs and rivers. It is a wealth of hunting and fishing resources. People go there to canoe all the time. They go there in the wintertime to dogsled and to ice-fish.

I was there last summer, and I saw two wolves just in one day, on a day trip to the Boundary Waters.

It is some of the cleanest water that you will find anywhere in this country. You can drink the water right out of the middle of the lakes. You will find lake trout and northern pike and walleye. There is no better place in the world for it.

Over 150,000 people visit this incredible place every year, and so what that means is that the outdoor recreation economy in Northern Minnesota benefits greatly from the Boundary Waters.

This generates thousands of jobs and supports hundreds of local, small businesses, and it generates millions in economic activity.

Outdoor recreation is also a significant economic driver in the region around the Boundary Waters Wilderness. What happens here with this mine that will be allowed by the CRA is that this mine puts this incredible resource and the economic benefits of this resource at great risk.

It is kind of unbelievable to know that this kind of mine in 100 percent of the instances where they have been built has caused pollution.

What happens is you bring up the rock from underground. The sulfide in the rocks interacts with the water and the oxygen. My colleague Senator HEINRICH is an expert on this. That rock interacts with the water and the oxygen, and it creates basically sulfuric acid. That sulfuric acid flows directly into the Boundary Waters and on into Voyageurs National Park.

We have a map here so you can see how the water flows. This sulfuric acid, of course, is extremely dangerous, not just for fish and wildlife and the whole ecosystem in the Boundary Waters but also for the humans that recreate there, that swim in this water, that canoe in this water.

This is why Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, why sportsman's groups, why Trout Unlimited, and Pheasants Forever, and outdoor people of all kinds have weighed in and said: No. Simply, this is the wrong thing to do. Not this mine in this place. Even descendants of the great President Theodore Roosevelt have said that we should protect this national treasure and "leave it as it is."

This is also why this mine is so unpopular in Minnesota. A recent poll showed that 70 percent of Minnesotans across the political spectrum—Independents, Republicans, and Democrats—agreed that protecting the Boundary Waters from sulfide-based mine pollution should be a very important priority for elected officials in the State. And 61 percent of Minnesotans have said that they support establishing a permanent protection for public land within the Boundary Waters Watershed.

So that is the first reason because this place is so special and because this mine is so dangerous to this place.

But the second reason why, colleagues, we should oppose this CRA is that it sets an incredibly unprecedented and dangerous use of the Congressional Review Act. Now, we know that the Congressional Review Act is a way for Congress to doublecheck the executive branch if Congress feels that the Executive has passed a regulation that goes too far, that didn't follow the laws that Congress passed.

If the Executive passes a regulation that Congress feels doesn't reflect the will of Congress, then Congress can within 60 days say: Nope. You can't do that. That doesn't make sense.

But that is not what is happening with the CRA before this body tonight because for the first time ever, the House is asking the Senate to apply

the CRA process not to a rule, but to a statute, to a public land order.

They want to claw back a public land order that was put into effect legally and lawfully 3 years ago. This was never the intention of the Congressional Review Act. It has never been used in this way, to overturn a mineral withdrawal or any public land order, and especially not a mineral withdrawal that was finalized 3 years ago like this one was.

Now, I know that many of my Republican colleagues are thinking about this, and they are asking themselves: What does this mean? What are the implications of this? What would happen if this were to pass—this CRA were to pass?

And ask yourself: What would you do if the shoe was on the other foot? What would you do if we set this precedent where we say that with a simple partisan majority, Congress can claw back a public land order that has been in place potentially for years or decades? What might that mean in North Dakota? In Montana? In Utah? In Arizona? In any State in the country if these public land orders could be undone so easily? I mean, it would be chaos, I think.

The third reason that I want to talk about why it is so important to oppose this Congressional Review Act before us today, this House resolution, is that this will violate Tribal treaty rights in a way that is strongly opposed by Tribal Nations not only in Minnesota, but also around the country.

These are Tribal Nations, indigenous people, that have lived in Northern Minnesota, on the borderlands of Northern Minnesota, for time immemorial. They have treaties with the Federal Government, particularly the treaty of 1854, which grants to these Tribes in exchange for the land that they gave up hundreds of years ago, it grants them hunting and fishing rights, and also the rights to harvest manoomin, which is wild rice.

And yet, this CRA before us today completely aggregates those Tribal treaty rights. It ignores the responsibility of the Federal Government to consult with Tribes, which has not been done. That is why so many of the Tribes across the country have come together to oppose this.

This includes the Grand Portage Band and all the other members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. It includes the National Congress of American Indians which passed a resolution urging the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to at least hold a hearing on the implications of this before this legislation—this resolution—passes the Senate.

Tribal Nations across the country have spoken out, including the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes, White Earth Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation, the Eastern Shoshone. They have all come out in opposition to the CRA.

So before I hand over to my dear colleague from Minnesota the senior Sen-

ator from Minnesota, Senator KLOBUCHAR, I want to address one question that I have heard made in favor of this mine and just kind of flush this out for folks.

Now, some people will say that we need to pass this CRA for its national security benefits. They claim that this mine will provide much-needed sources for critical minerals.

But I ask, colleagues, to think about what is really going on here and who will be the owner of these minerals because that is very important as you think about this national security argument.

Just because these minerals are mined on American land, on public land, on national forestland, that does not mean that they will be reserved for American markets. In fact, the copper and nickel mined in the Duluth Complex which is where the Boundary Waters is, where this mine would be, would essentially be brought out of the ground. They would be shipped to the Pacific Coast. They would be taken to China where they would be smelted, and there, they will either be sold by the company that is doing all of this, a foreign international conglomerate from Chili, Antofagasta. It will either be sold there or sold back to the United States to be paid for by all of us.

This mine is wholly owned by Antofagasta, a massive Chilean conglomerate with billionaire owners. It is one of the largest foreign mining companies in the world. They have deep ties to the Chinese Government in its mineral processing operations. Most recently, Antofagasta secured record-breaking, zero-cost processing agreements with the Chinese copper smelters, all of which are state-owned in whole or in part.

So what we are doing here is we are creating a pathway for this foreign company to build a mine, pollute the Boundary Waters, send the minerals to China where they will be processed with this sweetheart deal, and then sold on the open market. And that is not an America-first strategy.

So I encourage my colleagues to take a look at who is benefitting from this mine, and it certainly won't be in the long run Minnesotans. There are no real winners here except for this massive Chilean company.

So in a few hours, we are going to be voting on this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to vote no on rolling back protections for the Boundary Waters Wilderness Area. We can support mining in Minnesota and in this country, but not this mine in this place.

We can be good stewards of our natural resources and support mining, but not this mine. These public lands belong to all of us, and we should not allow them to be exploited for our loss and the gain of others far, far away.

With that, I would yield the floor to my colleague Senator KLOBUCHAR who has been such a strong champion for Minnesota for so many years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, this bill is an unprecedented use of a procedural mechanism that would have far-reaching consequences, not just for the Boundary Waters, as Senator SMITH has explained, but for public lands across our country.

I have always supported science-based review, especially a project so close to this cherished Boundary Waters canoe area, and I continue to have concerns about this administration's disregard for science.

So as many of my colleagues know, I am the granddaughter of an iron ore miner. My great-grandparents came from Slovenia, and that was the job that my great-grandpa came to do. He died very young from his work, and then my grandpa took it up. He started very, very young in underground mines with a number of brothers and sisters that he took care of when his parents died, married my grandma, and this was his life. And he loved that life.

But he mostly also loved the time he had in the outdoors. He loved to hunt. He loved to fish. Every day he would go down 1,500 feet in that cage in that mine and always thought about what he thought about with that black lunch bucket that my grandma packed for him every single day in that little house that they had taken when a mine closed down in Babbitt. They put it on the back of a flatbed truck and they blew a hole with dynamite in the ground and put that house on top of it. That was their life.

My grandpa worked most of his life in the mines as did so many friends. He became, in his later years, the foreman of the mine, and I would meet people when I was first running for U.S. Senate up in Northern Minnesota that would say to me: You know, my dad worked with your grandpa. And whenever they explored a dangerous part of the mine, the other foreman wouldn't go. They radioed down from above. But your grandpa, he went first. He went with the guys, and he went down in the mine.

Such a big part of my life. That is why I have stood with our miners. I have stood with them when we had steel dumping from China and brought President Obama's chief of staff up to Northern Minnesota, met with our steel workers and our unions.

I have stood with our workers through good times and bad and will continue to do that. We have, as Senator SMITH explained, some exciting new projects up there like Mesabi Metallics which is going to be a big taconite mine, a modern mine with some of the biggest equipment in the country. And we will have more.

But what this is about today is something else because my grandpa always got that balance. It was a balance of the working life that we must continue up in Northern Minnesota and a balance of the world around him, that world where he loved to hunt and he loved to fish.

I was 18 years old before I took a vacation that didn't involve a tent or a camper in one way or the other. I grew up in a family that valued the outdoors. My mom and dad met in the Twin Cities Hiking Club and generations of Minnesotans have found this same joy: hiking, paddling, camping in the Boundary Waters, and our beautiful parks. But I don't think they would have ever expected this.

H.J. Res. 140, as I noted, is an unprecedented use of a procedural mechanism that would have far-reaching consequences, not just for the BWCA but for other public lands. Secretaries of the Interior have long had the ability to issue public land orders to reserve Federal land for specific uses, setting it aside for things like infrastructure, certain military purposes, training and border security, or protection and conservation.

And public land orders are carefully made. The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management gather public input. They hold townhalls. They analyze inputs.

But now for the first time, the Congressional Review Act is being used to rescind a public land order. Public land orders have never been considered rules under the CRA and have never been submitted to Congress as rules.

Today, the CRA before the Senate is being used simply as a way of revoking the land withdrawal without having to conduct that public engagement. And this unprecedented use of the CRA will have broader disruptive impacts on land management agencies' ability to oversee public lands all across the country.

This process is focused on Northern Minnesota today, but this new precedent could lead to Congress overturning public land orders elsewhere.

The Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service have long been trusted with working with landowners, nearby towns, and counties, and others to develop plans for managing public lands. This is often a give-and-take process built on trust. But this Congress, for the first time, has disrupted decades of work by the Bureau of Land Management and has stepped in the way of locally led land management.

These CRA resolutions disregard extensive public input. If this CRA resolution were approved, public access to some of the Nation's most treasured landscapes could be lost and the careful management of their lands and waters eliminated.

There are hundreds of public land orders that have been issued to protect our public land that could be put at risk: The Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge in Montana, considered a sportsman's paradise for its elk and bighorn sheep hunting; the 355,000 acres of Federal land near the Chaco Canyon National Historical Park in New Mexico. The precedent potentially being established today could pave over the comprehensive process undermining these landowners.

The CRA even threatens the protected status of the Grand Canyon, which happens to sit on significant mineral deposits. This precedent could lead to CRA resolutions beyond the BLM's work. Forest Service plans might be the next Land Management Agencies Congress attempts to disrupt using this process.

This ultimately could lead to Washington micromanaging public lands rather than letting the people and experts that live near the forest, grasslands, and waterways have a say.

So look at who is concerned about what is happening in the Senate today, the groups that are supportive of what I have been talking about here and are against this effort: American Fisheries Society, American Fly Fishing Trade Association, American Hunters & Anglers, Angler Action Foundation, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, Fly Fishers International, the Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Trout Unlimited, Minnesota Wildlife Federation, National Deer Association, National Wildlife Federation, North American Falconers Association, North American Grouse Partnership, Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Trout Unlimited, Whitetails Unlimited, Wildlife Management Institute, the American Canoe Association, the Outdoor Alliance, Outdoor Life, Outdoor Realm.

So maybe some time should be taken to listen to what some of these national groups are saying that care about what my grandpa and my dad cared about, and that is public lands that can be used for recreation, for canoeing, for hunting, and for fishing.

So I will end with this: Sigurd Olson, the great Ely, MN, author and conservationist, wrote that "joys come from simple and natural things, mists over meadows, sunlight on leaves, the path of the moon over water."

This is the Boundary Waters. So Sigurd Olson just happened to be the dean of Ely Junior College and yet he rose to this national fame and that is when my dad met him because my dad went to a 2-year college, Ely Junior College, because my grandma believed that somehow that would launch his career in journalism. She happened to be right, but no one would have believed it then.

But Sigurd Olson was then the college dean. My dad and Sigurd Olson maintained a friendship for many years, powered by their shared love for the written word, for the Boundary Waters, and for their efforts to preserve Minnesota's forests and parks.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed into law Hubert Humphrey's bill, and this is the desk that I stand at today—Hubert Humphrey's desk—to protect this area by creating the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

And the Boundary Waters are now the most visited wilderness area in the

country, welcoming 150,000 people each year. Over the course of my dad's career, he wrote 8,400 columns, more than a few of which were dispatches from the Boundary Waters. Speaking to the complexity of this national wonder, my dad wrote about the Boundary Waters: This is a place of woods and lakes and repose most of the time where a person can roam or drift or watch and listen. And that is not so much different in winter than in summer.

He called it a million acres of waterway and forest unlike any in the United States.

And my grandpa who loved that area, loved the forest, understood that you can make both things work but not when you are messing around with rules, not when you are not even taking the time to look at what is happening here to our public lands, and instead are just making this decision at night and going home for the day.

I thank Senator SMITH for her work, and I ask my colleagues to vote with us and listen to us about what is going on here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator KLOBUCHAR.

Senator KLOBUCHAR, you and I have known each other for many years, and I never knew that your father was friends and colleagues with Sigurd Olson, which is really incredible. He is such a storyteller of this particular part of this amazing, beautiful part of the world. So thank you for sharing that. And also thank you for the incredible representation that you have provided to Northern Minnesota and all of Minnesota for so many years. Your deep roots in Minnesota's Iron Range gives you so much credibility across the State, particularly on this issue. So thank you.

Mr. President, I believe that Senator BALDWIN wants to say something.

Ms. BALDWIN. Thank you for your leadership, Senator SMITH.

And I also want to note the powerful words that Senator KLOBUCHAR just shared. She took me down memory lane as we remember the conservationists and the folks that came from our States.

And just earlier today, I was noting with my staff that next week we will be commemorating the 56th anniversary of Earth Day, the first Earth Day, and it was Gaylord Nelson, a Senator in this body who brought forth the whole concept of respecting the Earth and celebrating with a day focused on celebration of the Earth.

Wisconsin was also home for large portions of their lives, Aldo Leopold and John Muir. And hearing those accounts makes me feel especially humbled and honored to rise to speak to this resolution, this joint resolution that is before the Senate right now that we really must defeat.

I want to share with my colleagues what is at stake if the Senate removes

protections from the Boundary Waters. The Boundary Waters Wilderness Area is one of the most pristine freshwater systems in the entire country.

And if these protections are rolled back and mining moves forward, there is no restoring, there is no restoration of this watershed. It will be risking permanent damage for the profits of a multibillion-dollar foreign mining company, and I will return to that in a moment.

We must recognize who will be most affected by revoking the protections that have been in place for decades and for good reason.

Tribal nations in this region have lived with and depended upon the Boundary Waters for generations. These lands are sacred to the Ojibwe people. Tribes have treaty rights to hunt, to fish, and to gather. Voting for this resolution would betray our centuries-old treaties between the United States and the Chippewa of Lake Superior.

We cannot say that we respect Tribal sovereignty while undermining the very resources that those rights depend upon.

There is a reason that the Boundary Waters is also America's most popular and water-rich wilderness area. Its 1.1 million acres contain more than a thousand pristine lakes and 1,200 miles of river and stream.

Voting for this resolution risks the destruction of the region's prized natural resources, where the wild rice beds and the fisheries are thriving, and the water is clean and safe to drink.

People come from all over this country to recreate on the Boundary Waters, fish in the lakes, hunt in the forests. Before my colleagues vote to greenlight a mining operation, I urge them to come and see the beauty and the magic of the Boundary Waters. I have done so. It was an amazing experience. And I have heard from so many Wisconsinites who have shared their stories, their memories. And they cannot fathom the idea that Congress would take the step that we are on the precipice of taking.

As well, I have heard from our 11 federally recognized Tribal nations and their strong opposition. Our waters, our rivers, our lakes are all a part of the way of life in the Midwest. They provide fresh drinking water; they are endless sources of recreation; and they bring tourism to our States.

You know, this area, in particular, generates over \$900 million in annual tourism revenue and sustains roughly 17,000 jobs. Rural towns across the region depend on the protection of the wilderness area and its natural resources. Family-owned small businesses that provide guiding and fishing and outdoor recreation will not survive if the water is polluted and the wilderness is degraded.

The Boundary Waters must not be put at risk of perpetual pollution, which is what this resolution would do. I also just want to make it clear to my

colleagues who actually stands to benefit if this resolution passes the Senate.

While we have heard that rolling back protections for the Boundary Waters would bring economic opportunities for the region, that is false. The profits from the mining contract that this resolution aims to fast track are ultimately going overseas to benefit a Chilean multinational organization and China's industrial supply chain.

That is right. After enabling the destruction of one of our most pristine natural resources, those very resources are expected to be sold to China. With this resolution, the majority will be cashing out on a mining deal that has no long-term benefit to our economy or workforce.

The short-term gain of a mining contract cannot compete with the benefits of protecting the region that already generates, as I said earlier, over \$900 million annually in tourism revenue and sustains nearly 17,000 jobs.

This resolution does not invest in the future of communities across the Boundary Waters, nor does it respect the treaties with our Tribal nations. Its passage would come at public expense while the profits from the project flow to foreign corporations.

I invite my colleagues who have never yet made it to the Boundary Waters to come and experience it for yourself.

I encourage you to meet with the Tribes and small businesses in the region and see for yourself what we stand to lose. I implore my colleagues not to jeopardize the future of one of the most pristine freshwater ecosystems in America and override Tribal rights.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on this resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I want to just thank my colleague from Wisconsin for her powerful words and her longtime support for the Boundary Waters and for treaty rights and for American jobs and American-made products.

And I just so greatly appreciate your being here today in support of this and appreciate very much—and I also really appreciate my colleague Senator HEINRICH from New Mexico being here today as well to talk about how important this is and why this matters so much to him.

I know Senator HEINRICH is planning a trip to the Boundary Waters this summer, and we will all be able to hear stories of that when you get back.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Minnesota for her endless advocacy for this special place, one of America's true gems.

I do hope to make it to the Boundary Waters this summer. Last July, I was supposed to be in the Boundary Waters.

I had long planned a trip with my family. It was to be our first time exploring the Boundary Waters.

My family made it; I did not. My wife Julie and my sons Micah and Carter had an incredible time that they will always remember. They paddled their canoes across lakes. They portaged from lake to lake. They slept under a blanket of stars that most people in Washington, DC, could never imagine because they can't see it.

I was supposed to be part of that trip. I was stuck here, fighting to strip out the public land selloff language from the Republican budget bill. They sent me lots of pictures afterwards, pictures of the northern pike here that my son caught—my son Micah.

My wife Julie was able to spend some really quality wilderness time with both of our sons before they went off to their respective colleges for the year. She basically told me that they ate more food on this trip than most rugby teams.

Like my family, millions—literally millions—of Americans have hunted and fished and paddled and traversed the Boundary Waters. In fact, it has an almost religious connotation among sportsmen in particular.

It is somewhat amazing to me to see a Republican Party that used to have such fidelity to hunters and anglers basically roll all of the organizations that my colleague from Minnesota rattled off which said this is not the right place for this—organizations like Pheasants Forever, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, and Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and on and on and on—but that is where we are today.

You know, stories from the Boundary Waters, stories of stalking whitetail and grouse are passed down from generation to generation in the Midwest. Legendary stories of lake trout and northern pike and walleye abound, sometimes with the fish actually getting bigger with each telling of the story. The water, as the Senator from Minnesota, Senator SMITH, said, is some of the cleanest you will find anywhere in the lower 48. It is a bucket-list, once-in-a-lifetime designation for so many public land owners. And that is precisely what is at risk with this vote—one of our Nation's true crown jewels.

So let's back up a little bit for folks who don't have firsthand knowledge of what the Boundary Waters is, where it is, and do a little explaining.

The Boundary Waters is one of the most incredible intact wilderness landscapes left in our Nation. It is an absolute tapestry of lakes and streams, consisting of well over 1,000 individual lakes, 2,000 designated campsites, and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams. The Boundary Waters contains the largest contiguous landscape of uncut forest remaining in the Eastern United States.

The 3 million-acre Superior National Forest in which the Boundary Waters

sits contains fully 20 percent of all the freshwater in the entire National Forest System—an incredible figure.

In fact, this wilderness was so important that Teddy Roosevelt himself, President Roosevelt, set it aside as part of the Superior National Forest all the way back in 1909. Almost half a century later, Congress voted overwhelmingly to include the Boundary Waters as one of the original units of the National Wilderness System.

In many ways, Minnesotans rely on the Boundary Waters to support their local economy. Every year, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness draws more visitors—more visitors—than any other wilderness area in the entire Nation. This recreation supports 17,000 Minnesotan jobs, contributes roughly \$1 billion in annual sales, and preserves and shares, more importantly, a way of life—a way of life that has been passed down from generation to generation.

This is a place, this is an area that is no stranger to threats. In addition to containing so many of the natural resources that come with the wilderness, the area also contains copper.

I should say, you know, for one, there is a long history of iron mining in this area. I grew up the son of someone who worked for Anaconda Copper, the grandson of somebody who was a gold miner. But I want to talk a little bit about the difference between some of these Iron Range mines that mine ore that is just chemically inert. It is chemically stable.

When you mine for iron, you are basically mining iron oxide. You are mining rust, and then you are turning that back into iron. This is not that kind of mine. This is a copper sulfide mine, and the company that wants to mine here is called Twin Metals. And that sounds so Minnesotan. I think they might have picked it to sound Minnesotan. It is actually a subsidiary of a Chilean mining company called Antofagasta.

They want to build this copper-nickel mine less than a mile upstream from the Boundary Waters on a spit of land between two waterways.

Let me explain a little bit about what it looks like to mine copper in a place like Boundary Waters, particularly when you are mining copper sulfide ore. The company will have to dig some very deep shafts to reach these very deep ore bodies. They will then remove many millions of tons for processing, millions and millions of tons of copper sulfide ore. After they remove what copper and nickel are economically recoverable in that ore, they will dump as much as 100 million tons of waste rock and low-grade ore on the site, never to be removed.

Now, deep underground, the copper is locked up in this ore rich in sulfur, but that ore has never been exposed to water. It has never been exposed to oxygen or air. And when you bring it to the surface and you let it sit out in a pile and you expose it to air and water, oxygen bonds with that sulfur, and

when you bond oxygen to sulfur, you get sulfuric acid. Sulfuric acid is one of the hardest waste products you can imagine to try to control.

The waste rock that has been dumped on the site will naturally form sulfuric acid. That acid will then dissolve toxic heavy metals present in the waste rock, and then you have this toxic stew of heavy metals along with sulfuric acid.

Now, there is no plan to remove all this waste from the mine site, so it is basically a ticking time bomb of acid and heavy metals.

Studies by the EPA say that the odds of sulfuric acid polluting the Boundary Waters under this scenario are highly likely. And I will do you one better: It has a perfect track record of polluting water. That is according to the peer-reviewed study on sulfide-ore copper mining that drove the 2023 decision to ban mining in the area. It is also my personal experience as a former natural resources trustee who had to negotiate with copper companies that polluted water with this same technology.

So it is not just highly likely; it is guaranteed. Sulfide mining in the Rainy River watershed will cause certain irreversible pollution to the Boundary Waters. Think again about eating those fish that you caught or drinking that water you dipped from the middle of the lake, because the thing about sulfuric acid poisoning is it is invisible. You can't see it, but it makes water unsafe to drink.

Sulfuric acid also lowers the pH level of water, changing entire ecosystems. At high levels, fish that rely on healthy water to live literally experience respiratory failure in water poisoned by sulfuric acid. They literally drown to death. They will not be able to reproduce normally. Their food sources will be tainted, meaning entire fish populations of lake trout and smallmouth bass will be at risk.

The sulfuric acid produced by this mine will leach heavy metals like lead, mercury, or copper into that same water. That will then accumulate in the bodies of fish and wildlife that consume that water. And when people eat meat and fish with heavy metals, they accumulate in our bodies too.

This isn't a myth; it is a virtually guaranteed outcome because we know that plans for the mine include storing over 100 million tons of toxic waste rock on the edge of the wilderness upstream of the Boundary Waters. Think about how much that is. Let's visualize how much waste rock we are talking about being dumped and never removed from this mine site. A hundred million tons is like 740,000 Boeing 777 airplanes. It is twice the mass of all the living people on Earth. It is 500 times the weight of the Empire State Building sitting there, generating toxic acid. It is the amount of toxic waste that Antofagasta—a foreign mining company that plans to sell the copper to foreign countries—plans to store on the edge of the largest patch of wild rivers

and forests in our country, the place that has 20 percent of all the freshwater in our National Forest System.

The damage is really unthinkable, but it is also irreversible because currently we don't have any technology available that is capable of reversing sulfuric acid contamination.

This is bad. It is so bad that in 2016, even before there was a mineral withdrawal, the Obama administration canceled the mine's lease. And in 2023, after years of review and overwhelming public support, a 20-year mineral withdrawal was established in the Rainy River watershed, home to the Boundary Waters. That decision reflects common sense. Some places are too valuable to gamble with.

With today's technology, if it is a gamble, why not wait 30 years when maybe that technology is a sure bet? But it is not a sure bet today.

That decision also reflected the voices of the American people because the assessment that led to the mineral withdrawal was completed by the U.S. Forest Service in 2022, and it included hundreds of thousands of public comments—675,000 public comments—over 95 percent of which favored the withdrawal area being withdrawn from non-ferrous mining, sulfide mining.

Today, 70 percent of Minnesotans oppose mining in the Boundary Waters. Instead of listening to Minnesotans and Americans from all over the country who care about this place, Republicans today are using an unprecedented, blunt-force legislative method that includes zero public comment—no comment period—to make decisions about our public lands without any input from the people to whom those lands actually belong.

We can't talk about the Boundary Waters without also speaking of belonging and Tribal communities. Three Tribes—the Bois Forte Band, the Fond du Lac Band, and the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa—have extensive treaty rights in Northeastern Minnesota. These are rights to do things like hunt and fish and gather wild rice. These rights are guaranteed to them by the 1854 Treaty of La Pointe and have been reaffirmed by Federal courts over and over again. By overturning the public land order with a CRA resolution, Senate Republicans will not only cut Tribes out of the conversation, but they disrespect the Tribal treaty rights and directly risk those Tribes' guaranteed access to their traditional way of life and subsistence use of this place.

So since my Republican colleagues are refusing to include constituents' voices in this process, I will bring a few of those from New Mexico to the floor here today.

Dr. Brown, from Santa Fe, wrote me in urging that we oppose this vote. He said:

I've canoed the Boundary Waters many times and can attest to its uniqueness . . . with some of the purest water in the U.S., these lakes are visited and admired by thousands of Americans . . . Pollution of the

Boundary Waters would be a tragedy for the nation and the world.

Dr. Merriman, from Albuquerque, said:

Please vote no on HJ Res 140. Some things are worth more than money.

Lee, from Los Alamos, wrote:

I am writing to ask you to oppose H.J. Res 140 . . . The [Boundary Waters Canoe Area] is a national treasure—not just for Minnesotans but for me and other New Mexicans as well.

From Naima in Santa Fe:

This is a hideous giveaway to corporate profiteers and cannot stand. Please vote NO.

From Dr. Bagne in Silver City:

Any short-term economic gains would clearly not outweigh the long-term risks to the ecosystem and water supplies. Although it is in Minnesota, many similar public lands in New Mexico would be threatened by . . . relaxing mining rules. Please oppose.

Judy, from Albuquerque, wrote:

I am aghast . . . Please do all that you can to stop this giveaway of our wonderful public lands. This happened despite all the thousands of citizen signatures against the vote.

From Roxane in Rio Rancho:

Please vote against reversing the ban on mining . . . I am very concerned that the Trump Administration is flying under the radar and doing a lot of damage that will be difficult, or even impossible, to reverse.

From Amy in Albuquerque:

Please do not allow this to happen. [The Boundary Waters] belong to all Americans, not to a Chilean mining company with contracts to [process ore in] China.

Their voices matter because the Boundary Waters are our public lands—all of ours. President Teddy Roosevelt, who had the incredible foresight to protect this beautiful place, had it right when he said that we “should see to it that they are preserved for [our] children and [our] children’s children forever, with their majestic beauty all unmarred.”

The way I look at public lands is that they are the closest, most tangible thing we have to being able to represent true Jeffersonian democracy.

They are the thing, as we saw last June, that often unites us across the political spectrum. If you take these public lands away, you tear away the places where we are the most free. This is an issue of our heritage, and it is an issue of our inheritance.

It is an issue for Minnesota, but it is not just an issue for Minnesota—it is an issue for our Nation. It is about something bigger. It is a test of whether our public lands—as a friend of mine likes to say—our public lands that are the anvil upon which we have forged our collective identity.

Can that be stripped from us? Can it be stripped of their protections?

You know, I am going to summarize this one more time. We are going to allow a foreign mining company to take our minerals, to ship those minerals to China for processing, and then to sell those back to us with a tariff on top.

Like, how is that “America First”? It is not. And to risk this globally, in-

credible rare asset that is the Boundary Waters for that, boy, that just seems really shortsighted to me.

I would urge every one of my colleagues—I would urge you—to vote no on this Congressional Review Act resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from New Mexico for laying out the issues so ably that are before us with this House resolution on the Boundary Waters. It is wonderful to have a colleague who not only is really good at being a legislator but who is also an outstanding hunter and fisherman and then, on top of that, is also an engineer so that he can explain to us the impacts of this kind of mining on the environment with a scientific expertise that I just really value.

I thank Senator HEINRICH so much for being here tonight to help tell the story of what the impact of this mine would be on this incredible place and why it is so important that this CRA be defeated.

As I think about what I want people to know about this place, I can’t help but think about the first time that I saw the Boundary Waters myself. Some of my colleagues may know that I was originally born in New Mexico. I have lived in Minnesota for over 40 years now, but I was originally born in New Mexico. New Mexico is a desert climate. So, when I first went to Minnesota, I didn’t quite know what to make of all of the lakes and rivers and streams and the beautiful green everywhere.

But I was married to a man who had spent his high school years up in the Boundary Waters. He went to a camp up there where he would go up for weeks at a time and canoe throughout the Boundary Waters. The Boundary Waters are connected to a big Canadian provincial park called the Quetico, and you literally can canoe from surface water in the Boundary Waters and get all the way to Hudson Bay, which is just remarkable. I went up there for the first time to see this incredible place after Archie and I had lived in Minnesota for a few years, and I think, in a lot of ways, it is when I first fell in love with Minnesota—the place of Minnesota—because I just couldn’t believe all the water and the green and the wildlife and also how wild it was and to be able to be out on the water, in a canoe, and feel like you were just so far away from the pressures of modern civilization.

Yet, the Boundary Waters is really quite accessible to people. It is not one of those areas that is a wilderness area that is impossible to get to, which is why, as you know, we are talking about it tonight. People have been—you know, hundreds of thousands of people are able to visit the Boundary Waters each year and are able to experience what it is like to be in this place.

As I said earlier, the last time I was there was at the end of last summer. We were in the Boundary Waters just for a day trip, and even on that day trip, we saw two wolves, which is, like, really incredible. You can imagine in the wintertime, when it is so dark in that part of the world—long, long nights—the opportunity to see the aurora borealis, or the northern lights, which are just really phenomenal. Then, in the summertime, the long, long northern summer evenings stretch on until, you know, 9:30 or 10 at night, and you have incredible opportunities to go fishing and just be at the camp and just enjoy it. It is really amazing.

When I first went to the Boundary Waters with our kids, I started to get really interested in the history of this place, and I found it just fascinating to think about. So you have got, you know, what today we think of as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, which is a million areas of protected wilderness. It is important, I think, as I was diving into the history of this place, to understand that, historically, this has been the home of the Anishinaabe people, the Ojibwe people, in Northern Minnesota. They lived in this place for, you know, generations and generations. They canoed and hunted and fished to support themselves and their families and their communities, and that was their home.

Starting in the 18th century, the Boundary Waters got connected up through the fur trade routes as the voyageurs came, you know, all the way from across the Atlantic and in through, you know, what is now Northern Minnesota and Canada; but it was at that point that this was just an incredible resource for these fur trading routes that were a hugely—hugely—big deal. That fur trade really, you know, drove what was happening in that part of the country. In the 1700s and 1800s, French explorers and traders really opened up the area. The North West Company established a trading post at Grand Portage, and that was really kind of the economic driver.

In this moment, this part of the country that is now the Boundary Waters experienced some, you know, huge transitions, but I think it is important for us all to understand that, even though this is a wilderness place—it is a wild place—it has also always been a place where people were, where people were a part of what was happening in this country and in this particular part of the country.

Of course, you know, over time, as the United States became a country and entered into relationships with the Tribal nations that lived in this part of the country, that became sort of what drove a lot of the geopolitics, I guess you could say, of this part of the Nation.

In 1857, there was the Enabling Act, and the U.S. Congress was granted land to support schools through the University of Minnesota. Then a little bit later—this is right about the time of

the statehood for Minnesota; Minnesota was admitted into the Union in 1858—you know, there was additional negotiating that happened, and Congress granted the right to the State to swap lands in order to, you know, pull, you know, big chunks of land together.

By the time of about 1902, the U.S. Land Office—what it did is it withdrew a half a million acres in what is now the future WCA wilderness area, and they withdrew it from settlement, which was a really, really important thing because, at this time, we were seeing massive development in Northern Minnesota, a huge—you know, massive timber resources were present in the State and, of course, mineral resources, including iron.

In 1904, at the request of the State's forestry board, Congress granted 20,000 acres to the State for the Burntside Forest Reserve, and it said in that situation that State forest reserves should be devoted not alone to the business of raising timber but to the pleasures of all the people. It is interesting to me. I think about how Minnesota—even, you know, back more than a century ago—was thinking carefully about how to balance the power and the vitality of our economy in Northern Minnesota with also the understanding that some of that most precious land needs to be set aside in a place where people can enjoy it.

Over time, in 1909, the Superior National Forest was created by President Theodore Roosevelt—a great conservationist in our country's history. I often think of him as the man who really was the leader of the powerful Republican conservation movement in this country. So, in 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt created the Superior National Forest from previously withdrawn lands that had been set aside, including what is now part of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. There was continuing work both at the State level and at the Federal level to create sort of game refuges—yes, refuges—and other places that would be places where, you know, the moose and the caribou and other wild creatures would have a place to live even as Northern Minnesota was becoming increasingly developed.

In 1926, the roadless wilderness area in the Superior National Forest was established by the Secretary of Agriculture at the time, which was 640,000 acres. At that point, they said the policy here was to retain as much as possible the land which had recreational opportunities of this nature in the wilderness.

The efforts of this country to continue to protect this area went forward in the 1930s with the passage of the Shipstead-Newton-Nolan Act to protect water levels and lakeshores. There had been some dams and other sort of navigational structures that had been built that were having an impact on how the water flowed in the Boundary Waters. So here we had kind of a prohibition of

those dams and logging within 400 feet of this recreational area just to sort of protect the natural area.

And then in the late 1920s and early 1930s, work continued to sort of establish what was this special place that was going to be protected.

In 1938, the U.S. Forest Service established the Superior Roadless Primitive Area, with boundaries that, today, are quite similar—quite similar to what today is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

In Minnesota, we know a lot about something called Thye-Blatnik. I can talk more about that, but in 1948, Congress passed the Thye-Blatnik area. And what happened then is that, through the Thye-Blatnik Act, resorts and other private lands in the wilderness were bought up, and we established something that is still very important to this day, something that I work on all the time, that in lieu of the property taxes that might have been achieved through those lands, there is a payment in lieu of taxes called Thye-Blatnik that goes to the counties up in Northern Minnesota—Cook County and Lake County, St. Louis County—in exchange for what was this wilderness area for all of us to enjoy.

In 1949, President Truman issued an Executive order for basically an airspace reservation over the wilderness area to prohibit planes from flying in on the lakes and disrupting the experience of nature that people could have there. You were not allowed to fly lower than 4,000 feet over the wilderness.

And then in 1958, the Forest Service changes the name of this place to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, and it becomes a part of what we now know as the Boundary Waters.

In 1964, another really important milestone happened for the protection of this incredible place, and that was when Congress passed the Wilderness Act, and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area became part of the National Wilderness Preservation System with a clause that allowed for some logging and some use of motorized vehicles to continue in this area.

In 1965, the Secretary of Agriculture at the time was Orville Freeman, who was a Minnesotan, and Secretary Freeman issued all sorts of management changes that were recommended to kind of further protect this area from logging and from motorized boats and zoning to make sure that it would stay in its most natural state.

In 1978, Congress enacts the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act, which protected this place in perpetuity—we would hope—to be the wilderness area that it is. This was a very, very important thing.

It was somewhat controversial in Minnesota at the time, there is no doubt, but it has, today, become one of the most beloved places in Minnesota, thanks to the prescience of State and local leaders who went forward to protect this place.

And I am thinking—as I think about all of the people over so many generations who have been in this place for sustenance, for their food, for their housing, and in more modern times, for their ability to get away from it all and to enjoy this place in ways that is so difficult, I am thinking about all the people that I have heard from who have asked me to make sure that we are protecting this place.

I think, today—a big thanks to everybody who has reached out to our office. I think, today, we had hundreds of phone calls into the office asking me to do everything I can to protect the Boundary Waters Wilderness Area. And, honestly, over the last many weeks that this issue has been on the forefront of people's minds, we have gotten, I am sure, just thousands and thousands and thousands of messages from people.

And what is interesting about these messages is, you know, one, how many people have firsthand experience of this incredible place and what it means to them and just the diversity of the stories that people have.

I find this all the time when I go around Minnesota, and people will stop me and thank me for the work that I have done to protect this place, just the way that people want to tell the stories of what it has meant to them.

I think, today, especially in this time when it is so hard, especially for our young people to get—I mean all of us, however old you are—to get away from technology and to just sort of be centered in that experience of being, you know, out in nature, that it is causing people to be even more appreciative of what it means to have a wilderness area like this.

So I am going to just take a moment to read some of the stories that have been forwarded to me about the power of this place and the lives of people in Minnesota and across the country.

This is a story from Grand Rapids, MN, which is in the, kind of, northern part of the State, still south of the Boundary Waters, and it says:

I am a 53-year-old that has lived in Northern Minnesota her whole life. My family and I have enjoyed God's great Northwoods and all it has to offer through canoeing and camping, water skiing, biking, campfires, hiking, swimming, and much more. To see and hear about the Boundary Waters possibly condemned would be beyond a travesty. Just think of all of the animals, all of the family trips ended, tree growth, the disaster that would happen there, not to mention what it would do to the ecosystem and whatever else I cannot fathom right now.

This is a message that was sent in to me from Mahtomedi, MN, which is more in the Twin Cities, South Central part of the State in the Twin Cities area. This person wrote:

The Boundary Waters have been a very special place to me for a long time. I was first taken there by my father and my uncle, and it was the start

of my relationship with my uncle who was previously more distant from our family due to work. Since then, I have gone to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness once a year for the past few years with my father and my uncle. So many of my fondest memories are all from the Boundary Waters, and I hope to continue to make more of them, not only with my father and my uncle but with my own children in the future as well.

This is a message from someone from Farmington, MN. Farmington is also in the suburban metro area of Minneapolis and St. Paul. And this person said:

Me and my dad take a trip once yearly to canoe the Boundary Waters. I am 23 years old, and every year is incredibly special because the Boundary Waters are so important to my family. My dad proposed to my mom in the Boundary Waters. The Boundary Waters represents love; the wild, untamed American spirit; and my family. I want to be able to show my children pristine wilderness. I am begging you to act to protect the Boundary Waters.

This is a message from Rochester, MN, the home of Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota Rochester, an incredible community. This person has written this:

I was 10 years old when I first visited the Boundary Waters with my dad and my grandfather. I have since visited numerous times, including in 2020 when my grandfather, who had been going to the Boundary Waters for 40 years, made his final visit. This place is now, to my family, not just a tranquil retreat but also a time-honored family legacy and an act of remembrance for my grandfather. To allow the Boundary Waters to be permanently open for mining is to destroy one of the great natural gifts God has given Minnesota for current generations and generations to come.

Now, I just want to pause on this because I think it is an opportunity to talk a little bit more about—kind of help to locate in colleagues' and people's brains like where this mine will be, and I have a map which shows how this all flows.

So the Boundary Waters is this huge area, as we have said, a million acres of wilderness. And I am going to orient you here. The green here is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. And this is the border between Minnesota and Canada here. And this is the Quetico Provincial Park, which is this huge Canadian national park. It is really quite incredible.

And then here you see Ely, MN, which is a major entry point into the Boundary Waters. If you were to go over here, you would find—oh, I guess it is down here as I am orienting myself on this map. I guess it is over here. There is another access point that is commonly used by people in going into the Boundary Waters through the Gunflint Trail and Grand Marais, which is right here on Lake Superior.

And what we are talking about here, here you can see—I am going to give you the orientation here—the red—this area here, the yellow and green stripes, which you can see here, this is where the Twin Metals deposits are, this mine that we are talking about. These are the deposits that would be developed by Antofagasta, by the Twin Metals Mine, right here.

The red area shows how the water flows on the map, and it gives you an idea of why, even though this mine is just slightly outside of the actual boundaries of the Boundary Waters, that, for the practical purposes of the watershed and how the water moves, it might as well be inside the watershed in terms of how the damage to the water would flow because you can see, it is all connected. I mean, that is what happens with water, it flows.

And so here you have Birch Lake. It flows up this way. This is the Namakan River, Namakan Lake. Up here is Rainy Lake. This is close to where our kids went to camp. Kabetogama Lake is up here.

All of this area is connected. And so when you hear, colleagues, people telling you: You don't need to worry about this because this mine isn't in the Boundary Waters, that is not the point. The point is that it is in the watershed of the Boundary Waters, and that is how the damage is done.

(Mr. ARMSTRONG assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, I was showing colleagues this map because I wanted to make a couple of points about how this works—how the waterflow works.

One is that even though the mineral deposits and how they are going to be developed are just barely outside of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, the impact of the mine and the impact on the water spreads not only through the Boundary Waters, but it also flows up through these rivers that essentially form the border between Minnesota and Canada—the United States and Canada—and then into Voyageurs National Park. I think sometimes we don't talk enough about the impact on Voyageurs, which is an incredible park.

Together, Boundary Waters and Voyageurs offer people so many different ways of experiencing this wilderness, and the impact on both of them is really significant.

I think sometimes also it is hard for folks to fully understand and appreciate what is the impact on water quality of this kind of mine. And so I want to just share some of that with you as well as you think about what is the risk that is actually posed by this?

And I am going to get into this a bit more in some detail, but I think it is important, as you are considering this, to understand that during the mineral lease withdrawal process that happened in—well, really, stretched over time between, roughly, 2016 and 2021, when it was brought to a conclusion, there was a massive amount of effort, scientific research study that was done, huge

amounts of public comment to gather information about what people thought about this that became the basis for the decision to do this mineral withdrawal.

The mineral withdrawal process is defined in the Federal Land Management Policy Act. I believe it is the FLPMA, as people call it around here. And that was followed to a tee. And that congressional law allows for mineral withdrawals when it is determined that the potential risks of mines or other kinds of natural resources development pose too great a risk to the public resource that belongs to it all. So I will talk about that in a little bit more detail, but I wanted to just share with colleagues this background on why sulfide ore copper mining poses such a unique risk to the Boundary Waters of Minnesota.

So the background here is that a Chilean mining company operating under the name of Twin Metals—Senator HEINRICH said it sounds like a nice Minnesota name, and it is, but it is essentially a wholly owned subsidiary of Antofagasta.

So this Chilean mining company has proposed this mine—a large copper-nickel mine immediately upstream of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. And this proposed mine would extract copper from a geological formation called the Duluth Complex.

The Duluth Complex really runs kind of this way. It runs from northeast to southwest across Minnesota. This is important because there are lots of places where the Duluth Complex can be developed in addition to this particular place where these leases in question are right on the border of the Boundary Waters. There are huge resources all across the way. And, in fact, there are other mines under development down in this part of the State that are going through the process of getting developed.

So this Duluth process, which has a specific type of sulfide ore that interacts with water in ways that can create—that do create permanent contamination risks. And so the question is, How does this mechanism work? What exactly happens? And why is it so particularly difficult to manage in this watershed? Part of why the water quality is of such a big concern in this area is that the baseline condition here is just so outstanding.

A 2017 report by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency describes the water within the Boundary Waters watershed as “exceptionally clean and immaculate.” It concludes that the majority of the water bodies within this watershed have exceptional biological, chemical, and physical characteristics.

So the water in the Boundary Waters is so clean that visitors frequently drink right out of the lakes. There is no need for any purification. I have done this myself. When you are canoeing—now, you are not going to want to drink the water right next to the shore

because that is where the wild animals are, but you can go out into the middle of the lake and dip your mug into the water in the middle of the lake, and the water is incredible. So the fundamental hazard of sulfide ore mining is this acid mine drainage that happens.

When sulfide-bearing rock is excavated and exposed to oxygen and water, a chemical chain reaction begins, and what happens is that the sulfide minerals here, primarily—I might not say this exactly right—pyrrhotite, which is in the Duluth Complex, it oxidizes upon exposure and then you have sulfuric acid. And sulfuric acid then dissolves the surrounding rock and leaches out heavy metals—including copper and arsenic and lead and cadmium—into the water. And the resulting contaminated water, which is the acid mine drainage, is very acidic, and it is also laden with heavy metals, and that, of course, is toxic to aquatic life.

And the mining operations are going to dramatically increase the surface area of this rock as it is exposed to water and oxygen, and that accelerates the oxidation by many orders of magnitude compared to what you would see with natural weathering rates. And once this acid mine drainage has started, it is incredibly difficult to stop it, and it can continue for centuries or in perpetuity after the mine closes—a problem that is sometimes called perpetual treatment.

So if you think about it, this mine—the mining company itself says that they think that the mine would probably be in operation for, I think, 10, 15 years or in that area. Yet you are going to have centuries of impact from this so-called perpetual treatment issue.

A secondary chemical hazard, when you are doing sulfide ore mining in this particularly damp environment of the Boundary Waters watershed, would also substantially increase sulfite loading in the water. So elevated sulfate triggers a separate but related chemical reaction with serious consequences for human health.

Sulfite-reducing bacteria in sediment can convert sulfate to sulfide under low oxygen conditions and then the sulfide can react with inorganic mercury, which is naturally present in the environment, to produce methylmercury. And methylmercury bioaccumulates in the food chain, concentrating in fish at levels that can be dangerous for human consumption.

Sulfate discharges from existing disturbed areas of sulfide ore in the watershed have already elevated sulfate levels in the BWCA headwaters, and analysis of monitoring data indicates that there is a measurable water quality degradation that is already occurring.

So this is important because the Boundary Waters fisheries—particularly walleye, the most beloved fish in Minnesota—are central to the recreational and economic value of this place. And, of course, mercury contamination resulting in consumption advisories would have a significant im-

pact for the sport fishing industry, certainly for Tribal subsistence rights, and overall for the negative impacts on the regional tourism economy.

So I think, as you think about this, I mean, you have got to sometimes think: Wow, like, that sounds bad, but is that really going to happen? Do we really have to worry about that? Won't there be a way of avoiding this? And I just want to point out that we can look at the precedence of what has happened in the other places around the country to help answer that question.

The chemical risks that I have just described are not theoretical. In fact, there are two sites in the United States where this AMD from sulfide ore mining has caused serious and long-lasting harm. This is the acid mine drainage—AMD.

So the first site is the Gold King Mine in Colorado. This is from 2015. In August of 2015, an EPA contractor crew working at the abandoned Gold King Mine near Silverton, CO, accidentally breached a plug, releasing approximately 3 million gallons of acid mine drainage into Cement Creek, which is a tributary of the Animas River.

So this plume, which was literally visible orange from dissolved iron and heavy metals, it traveled more than 100 miles downstream through Colorado and New Mexico. It crossed into the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation relies on the San Juan River for irrigation and for drinking water, and three States had to declare emergencies.

The Navajo Nation had to shut down all water withdrawals from the river, farmers lost crops and were forced to sell their livestock, and some metals were measured at hundreds of times the legal limits for drinking water. Now, a treatment plant costing \$1.5 million to build and \$2.4 million per year to operate was still running as of 2024—9 years after the spill. This treatment plant is treating an estimated 300 gallons of contaminated water per minute draining continuously from the mine.

Local communities have declined Superfund designation for years out of concern for tourism, but the spill forced their hand, and victims have filed hundreds of millions of dollars in claims. None has been paid because the EPA evoked sovereign immunity.

So this was a breach in this gold metal mine in Silverton talking about a plume of this polluted acid drainage that is traveling more than 100 miles. And I know my Minnesota pretty well, but I would say that—I mean, certainly from Birch Lake to Voyageurs National Park is less than 100 miles. So it gives you an idea of how far this polluted water can spread in these kinds of dangerous environments.

I want to tell colleagues about another example of this kind of failure, and that is the Summitville Mine in Colorado. At the Summitville Gold Mine in southern Colorado, acid- and metal-laden runoff killed all biological life in a 17-mile stretch of the Alamosa River.

The operator declared bankruptcy in 1992 and abandoned the site midoperation, leaving EPA to manage the ongoing emergency, and the site was designated a Federal Superfund site, and Federal cleanup costs have exceeded \$210 million. The Alamosa River has never fully recovered.

I think it is important that we think about these things as we consider the risks of this kind of mine. And, again, I want to remind colleagues that that is one of the reasons why this mineral withdrawal was done—because the Forest Service considered these risks. They did an environmental assessment, and they concluded that this risk was too great to bear.

When we weigh these substantial risks of mining near the Boundary Waters, it is important for us to ask: What is the benefit? What might we see here? Where might we benefit? And this is, I think, really important to understand because where would these minerals go?

There has been an argument made that this is an “America First” national security priority to develop these minerals, but the question is, Who would own the minerals that are brought up from this piece of land right here near Birch Lake in Northern Minnesota? And the answer to that question is these minerals are going to go to China.

Antofagasta—the Chilean company that is wanting to develop these leases—operates a number of copper mines in South America, and it sends the majority of the ore that it pulls out of the ground to Chinese state-owned refineries for processing.

This year, in fact, these Chinese refineries have agreed to an unprecedented zero-dollar contract for processing Antofagasta ore. So if you think about it, what this means is that China is in such great need of copper ore to develop their energy and their AI infrastructure—and all of the reasons that they need copper ore—that they have agreed to directly subsidize Antofagasta's copper production by providing free processing of its ore.

So what this means, of course, is that the copper nickel that is pulled out of these deposits is going to probably travel by train to the Pacific coast, where it is then going to be transported to China, where it will be smelted in China, and it will be used.

Those minerals aren't going to then be sent back to us free. They are going to be maybe, at best, sold back to us in iPhones or other kinds of consumer products. But they are not ours to develop. We are going to have to buy them back.

So I question, colleagues: What is the advantage here? Where is the national security advantage? Where is the “America First” advantage that we are looking for?

With a critical minerals trade war already underway, shipping American minerals to China seems to run counter to so much of the work that Congress

is trying to do to onshore critical minerals and critical mineral supply chains.

So as I have been looking at this, I think it shows us that the proposed risks of this mine are substantial. They arise from the chemistry of the ore itself and, specifically, the chemistry in this very particular climate. And here in the particular rock and the particular climate in Minnesota, you have got the inevitability of AMD, this acid mine drain-off, from this sulfide-rich rock. You have the absence of any natural acid buffering capacity in the watershed. And then you have this sort of sulfate-driven methylmercury pathway that is developed.

These chemical realities, combined with the connectivity of this water across so many miles between the mine site here, the BWCA immediately adjacent to it, and then all of this watershed mean that the consequences of contamination would be really severe. They would be long-lasting, and they would be effectively irreversible.

And as we consider the risks that come from this mine proposal, I think we really have to ask ourselves if it is worth endangering one of our most beloved wilderness areas so that American minerals can be processed and used in China.

Now, colleagues, I want to turn to an issue that is a little bit geeky and nerdy. If you are in Congress, though, you appreciate the value of it. And this has to do with, sort of, what is the process that we are using right here, right now, to pass this CRA. Let me just kind of talk about that a little bit because I think it is important for us to understand the precedent that we will be setting if we pass this resolution.

So we have before us H.J. Res. 140, which would essentially apply the congressional review authority process, with all of the privileges of that process, to something that is not a rule—which is what the congressional review authority is all about—but is a public land order. And this is important to understand.

The mineral withdrawal that was done here was done under the authorities of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. And in that Federal Land Policy and Management Act, there are processes that Congress defined if they don't like what happened, if they don't like what the executive branch did. There are processes for congressional disapproval of a public land order.

And so under this Federal Land Policy and Management Act—I am going to call it FLPMA because that is what everyone calls it around here—there is an existing process for Congress to express its disapproval with a public land order, like the 2023 mineral withdrawal which is under consideration here on the Senate floor tonight. In that process that is described, Congress is given 90 days to adopt a concurrent resolution of disapproval.

So what is interesting is that, following the 2023 mineral withdrawal, which was completed in 2023, a resolution of disapproval on that mineral withdrawal was actually introduced. It was introduced on the House floor, and it passed out of the House Natural Resources Committee—all done, sort of, under the rules of sort of what FLPMA establishes. But it was never brought to the House floor, never brought to the Senate floor. And, in fact, Congress never acted on it.

And what happened, of course, is that under FLPMA you have 90 days to review or disapprove of an action, and that 90-day window opened and closed, and it passed.

So now what is happening—you might be asking: So why are we dealing with this now? This was in 2023. It actually came up on the House floor, and nothing ever came of it. Why are we dealing with this now?

Well, so the reason for that is that Republicans in the House are trying to use the congressional review authority, basically, to get a do-over. They are ignoring the fact that the CRA wasn't created to overturn a public land order, especially one that was 3 years old.

The CRA was designed by Congress to say: If the Federal Government passes a rule that we don't like, within 60 days we have the right to say: No, that is not what we meant; we want to draw it back again.

But, of course, that is not what is going on here. We are talking about not 60 days, not 90 days; we are talking about 3 years. We are not talking about a Federal regulation; we are talking about a public land order that has been standing for 3 years.

And I just think we have to think about what are the impacts of this precedent if this is the step that the Senate decides to take, because, if we are allowing these public land orders to be rescinded under the Congressional Review Act—I mean, this is a really dangerous precedent. Public land orders have never previously been submitted by any administration, including the first Trump administration. They have never previously been submitted as rules subject to the congressional review authority. This is the first one, submitted 3 years after the public land order was issued by the Department of the Interior. And, in fact, as I have just said, Congress set up a completely different set of procedures specifically to reconsider public land orders under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

So what we are seeing here is using the CRA to undo this public land order, which would establish an entirely new precedent. It would allow future Congresses to undo public land orders with no time limit on any public land order. And potentially, based on this precedent, it could allow future Congresses, with a simple partisan majority vote, to undo any administrative action.

So what would that look like? What would that mean? Because I think, as

we are making this decision, colleagues, you always have to think about that sometimes you are in power, sometimes you are out of power. But you have to think about what are the long-term implications of your decision.

So if this precedent is set—if we say, yes, the CRA could be used to undo a public land order, like we have here in the Boundary Waters—well, then, I would think that some future Democratic Congress might think: Hmm, let's use the CRA to undo a fossil fuel lease or a mining lease or a timber lease that we don't think makes sense in South Dakota. Maybe we could use—this precedent would suggest that you could use the CRA to undo a permit or undo a permit denial. In fact, it seems so broad, this precedent, that it could probably undo any determination on an administrative law matter.

So that seems to me to be really risky—because one of the things that matters in this country is that you might not always agree with what happens, but there has to be some continuity, some consistency. If we are constantly doing something and then undoing it and then doing it again, I can tell you from my business background that that is a disaster, because how do you decide to make investment decisions if you think that willy-nilly, depending on who is in power and what the environment is, what the political environment is, an investment that you made in one area, under one administration, is going to be undone by another administration at another time—because that is exactly what is happening here. One administration, one party, is undoing what was done perfectly legally 3 years ago.

Now, it makes sense to me, right, that if something is done that Congress just disagrees with, that you would have a window of time to undo it—like, I think, 60 days, 90 days, as we have with the CRA and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. That makes sense.

Congress says: No, that is not what we wanted. That is not what we intended. That was not our legislative intent when we wrote this. We are going to undo it.

Then that makes sense to me.

If an administration does a mineral withdrawal like we did here, like the Biden administration did here, and Congress says, "That was a mistake; that doesn't comply with the laws as we wrote them; we are going to change it," then, by all means, go ahead and try to change it, but not 3 years later and not in this way, not using a tool that was not—the CRA tool was not built for this. It was built to change a regulation that Congress disagreed with.

I think that it is a very dangerous—very, very dangerous—precedent, and I think it is the kind of precedent that, honestly, when the shoe is on the other foot, it creates problems. And I know that I have spoken with my colleagues

on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, who are concerned about this precedent and wonder what it might mean. And the Presiding Officer and I both have experience in the private sector, and I think we could relate to the idea that capital likes certainty, capital likes to minimize risk by knowing what is going to—what they can count on. And that is, I think, one of the gravest dangers of this action that the Senate seems poised to take.

In a world where the Senate is always going to be a place where people disagree with one another, where we are not always going to see things the same way, where a project that I might think shouldn't be permitted somebody else might think is reasonable to be permitted—those disagreements will always be there. But if we get into a situation where different parties, depending on whether they are in power or not, are just sort of—kind of randomly—undoing what has been in place for several years, I just think it further undermines the need for—it adds to chaos, it undermines certainty, and it certainly doesn't contribute to the problem-solving mentality that I think that we need around here.

And, of course, for my precious Boundary Waters, it has potentially really significant impacts, as I have described here, with the likely impact of water pollution on this precious place. And it also just leads to more lawsuits and more, sort of, legal wrangling that, in my mind, I wish we could just avoid.

In my life as a political leader, I have always found that the best ideas usually come from the people that are closest to the ground and closest to the work and do understand best what is going on, and so I am going to just take a few more minutes to read some of the comments that have come my way from people who have firsthand experience with the Boundary Waters and know what an incredible place it is.

This is a note from a constituent of mine from Medina, MN, which is, again, in the Twin Cities Metro Area. They write:

I know all the facts and arguments below are important, but for someone who went on Boundary Waters trips growing up, to bring my own girls starting at ages 5 and 8, it is truly a place like no other. It is my dad's happy place. He has led and gone on hundreds of BWCA trips over his lifetime, and at the young age of 72, he continues to go.

This is what I was talking about earlier about how, even though this is a very wild place, it is also so accessible to people.

This person goes on to write: He told myself and my husband when we were packing up for our first trip ever with the girls that from the moment that they were born, he has dreamt of this moment. The girls love it there. We have gone every year since. They adore being in the wilderness, seeing nature, and disconnecting from a world that

can be so overwhelming. They look forward to it every year. As a mom, I am truly proud that my two girls are getting these opportunities. They are learning valuable life skills while being up there, and it doesn't hurt that we all get to disconnect from technology for a few days. I beg you to work as hard as you can to save this special place so that my daughters' kids will be able to enjoy it all in its splendor for years to come.

This is a message that came to me from Waconia, MN, and this is what this person writes: I first visited the BWCA on a church retreat in 2001, and it has been a magical place for me since then. As someone with a wildlife biology degree who also happens to have conservative political beliefs, I believe that protecting our country's pristine wilderness should take precedence over any financial partnerships with other countries. While it may momentarily create jobs for people in the Iron Range, those benefiting the most will be in Chile and China. Let's protect one of our country's last natural treasures so it will be around for generations to come. I have a close group of nine girlfriends from high school, and we have been making an annual trip to the BWCA just outside of Ely—this is it; this is what it looks like—just outside of Ely for 23 years now. I am now a 41-year-old mother, and it is still my favorite weekend of the year. Please vote no to protect the environment, the animals, and my own personal sanity. I need the BWCA to remain protected. Remember, take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints; kill nothing but time.

I love that.

This is making me think that there has been, you know, some things written—some things said—about what is it that Minnesota wants when it comes to this mine and this place and protecting this place. The stories that I am reading give wonderful anecdotes about what people think about it, but I think I am just going to bring some polling into this here because this is polling that shows what Minnesotans think about this broadly across different parties.

I think it is important to know that this was research that was done just in December of 2025. That is quite recent. This research shows us that Minnesotans are deeply connected to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and intensely support its protection. Multiple polls over the last 10 years have consistently shown this deep connection amongst voters across all political alignments.

This connection drives opposition to sulfide ore copper mining within the Boundary Water watershed by double margins. Minnesota voters are generally pro-mining, as I talked about earlier. They are pro-mining for iron ore, taconite, and for copper-nickel with one important exception: They overwhelmingly oppose sulfide ore copper mines that would be located in the watershed of the Boundary Waters.

I am going to give you some of the data in a minute, but I think this is something that I was saying earlier and that I want to return to. Minnesota is a pro-mining State. We are so proud of our mining heritage, and we are very, very proud of the continuing contributions we make to the Nation's economy through iron ore. We are the No. 1 producer of iron ore in the whole country. It is a crucial part of our economic foundation, and we are excited about the opportunity to develop new precious metals mining in Minnesota as these new deposits in the Duluth Complex are being explored. But Minnesota's view is, not this mine in this place. That is the issue here because they understand how popular, they understand how precious this place is.

So here is some of the data that I think is interesting. The Boundary Waters is uniquely popular, and voters across all political parties—all political parties—say protecting it is an important priority.

Sixty percent of Minnesotans say that they have been to the Boundary Waters. That is kind of incredible.

The Boundary Waters is viewed favorably by nearly all Minnesotans across the State. Eighty-six percent of Minnesotans have a favorable view and 67 percent of Minnesotans have a very favorable view of Boundary Waters.

Now, I don't know what your State is like, Mr. President, but to find something that 60 percent of people say they have done and—what was it here?—86 percent of people have a favorable view of, that is a pretty big deal in our State, that everybody agrees on this.

I think it is important to understand—let me kind of break that down a little bit because you might be thinking: Is this something that is driven by party politics? And I can tell you as a Senator from Minnesota that there is nothing political about people's love of the Boundary Waters. It is not a Democratic love or a Republican love or an Independent love, and you see that in this data.

When you ask Minnesotans "How much of a priority do you think it should be for Minnesota elected officials to protect the Boundary Waters from mining pollution," overall, 68 percent say it is a priority. Eighty-seven percent of Democrats say this, 66 percent of Independents say this, and 50 percent of Republicans say this. So, again, it is not a partisan issue. By more than a 2-to-1 margin, Minnesota voters oppose sulfide ore copper mining in the Boundary Waters watershed, and opposition is consistent. It has been consistent over quite a few years because this issue has been very much on Minnesotans' minds for quite a few years. This has been in the works for nearly 10 years. So I think it is important to understand that this is consistent.

It is also interesting that support for sulfide ore copper mining in the Boundary Waters watershed has actually dropped in 8 years—over the last 3

years. So there is strong support for the Boundary Waters, strong opposition to developing a mine right in the watershed of the Boundary Waters, and actually a growing concern for what this might mean.

It says—I will just read this—it says: This is consistent with the view that Minnesotans generally support mining outside the Boundary Waters watershed by a 14-percent margin—40 percent favor, and only 26 percent oppose—and they strongly oppose sulfide ore copper mining within the Boundary Waters watershed.

I love this because it sort of shows that Minnesotans—I guess it is no surprise that as a Minnesota Senator, I should be reflecting the views of my constituents, and I think that is the case here—being pro-mining, wanting to see that opportunity, wanting to see that developed but not this mine in this place.

If you look at the biggest differences in opposition between mining in Minnesota versus mining in the Boundary Waters watershed, it is really quite interesting. The difference amongst Independents is plus-62. That is a very big number for people who look at polling across the board.

I don't know if it shows this in this memo that I am referring to, but I can tell you, because I have seen the data, that this is also not a regional thing. Even in Northern Minnesota, even in the Eighth Congressional District where this mine would be, a majority of people in the Eighth Congressional District would agree with this statement: not this mine in this place.

So you can imagine what Minnesotans are thinking about tonight if they are watching me talk here and thinking about what the Senate is doing, and they are asking themselves: Why is the Senate—why did the U.S. House—why are they undoing this protection that we had in place that we wanted? Why are they ignoring what we think should be happening in our State? Why are they ignoring or undermining or undoing the protections we want to see in place for these public lands that matter so much?

I can tell you from the conversations I have been having that it is contributing to their lack of trust in this body, the ability of this body to, you know, produce action and legislation that actually reflect what they want to see happen. It is frustrating to them, and they are asking me: Why is this happening? Why is it even possible that something that was done and done correctly and done legally, you know, years ago is now being undone by a lot of people who have never even been to Minnesota and don't really even know what this is all about?

You know, it is difficult for me to explain exactly why this is happening. That is why I am here tonight to talk about this in all the ways that I can and help to try to change the flow of this debate as I am trying to change the flow of this polluting water through the Boundary Waters.

I would like to take a couple of minutes and talk a little bit about the work that was done to establish this mineral lease withdrawal because I think there has also been some discussion about what was really involved in that and shouldn't we just really let sort of the permitting process play out as it normally would?

I would say I understand that argument that there is a—you know, we have established a permitting process at the State level and at the Federal level, and that should be allowed to play out. But, you know, it is interesting because Congress also, in this Federal Land Policy and Management Act, said that there might be occasions when there are places where we want to be able to withdraw those mineral leases because we can see ahead of time—before all of the work has been done, we can see ahead of time based on our environmental assessment that this is not wise, that this doesn't make sense.

That is exactly what happened with the Rainy River withdrawal environmental assessment, which was done with extensive work.

I have it all right here. I do not think that I will read it all to you tonight, but I want to just highlight some of the pieces of this so that it can give colleagues an idea of how comprehensive this environmental assessment was—I mean, honestly, much more comprehensive than the Congressional Review Act resolution that is before the Senate right now that included, you know, no outreach, no scientific evidence.

There was nothing that was presented in this CRA that says “Nope, this is all wrong” that was done in this environmental review. There was none of that at all.

So let me just highlight some of what is in this Rainy River withdrawal, which is the basis for the mineral lease withdrawal, to give you some confidence that it was done with a lot of integrity and a lot of scientific back-drop.

The environmental assessment says this: The purpose of the requested withdrawal is to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources in the Rainy River watershed, including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Mining Protection Area, and the 1854 ceded territory.

Let me just let everyone know that that is the ground that is covered by the 1854 treaty between the Federal Government and the Chippewa Tribes of Northern Minnesota that gives them hunting and fishing and wild rice-harvesting rights.

So it is saying basically that the purpose of this requested withdrawal is to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources in the Rainy River watershed from the known and potential adverse environmental impacts arising from exploration and development of federally owned minerals.

The withdrawal is needed because the Forest Service and the BLM have seen and can reasonably anticipate increasing interest within the private sector for developing the copper, nickel, ore mines in the Duluth Complex that may adversely impact the Rainy River Watershed.

This goes on to describe what the decision-making process looks like under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and describes how this act, written by Congress, of course, signed into law, authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to make and modify and extend or revoke withdrawals, in accordance with the terms of the law. And that is what this is all about.

So what happens in this environmental assessment is that they look at alternatives, they look at an alternative where the leases are withdrawn, for 20 years to be clear, or a second alternative where there is no withdrawal and the leases continue.

And they evaluate what is likely to happen, what is likely to happen to the environment. They also evaluate what is likely to happen to the socioeconomics of the region because, of course, these things are always a balance.

We don't want to live in a world where all we do is to protect environmental resources but there is no way for people to earn a living or to feed their families or to own their own home.

So let me just talk, let me just highlight some of this because I think it is interesting and gets to that point.

It says, the region—this region around the Boundary Waters has a long history of mineral exploration and extraction with mining activity attracting migrants and establishing communities since the 19th century. Similarly, the region's unique natural amenities and recreation opportunities have been a source of recreation and tourism and an amenity-based economy. The relative concentration of jobs in both mining and tourist and related sectors demonstrate these economic dependencies within the region, which I can say from personal experience is very true.

So in 2019, the mining-related employment was estimated at 3 percent of total employment in St. Louis County, Cook County, and Lake County, that is this region. So think about that, 3 percent.

This represents over 40 percent of all mining sector jobs in the State. Sectors associated with recreation and tourism also make up a higher proportion of total jobs in the study area relative to the State average.

In 2019, recreation and tourism-dependent jobs—so that includes retail trade, arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services—that was 22 percent of total employment in the three-county analysis plan.

But, of course, job numbers tell only part of the economic picture, average

annual wages vary substantially by sector. The average wage and natural resource extraction sector was generally high compared to wages in many other sectors. That is certainly the case. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness—this goes on to say—provides many thousands of visitors with a unique, primitive, and nature-based recreation experience. The wilderness area also provides economic drivers to the local communities and the State of Minnesota. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is surrounded by resorts, outfitters and guides, campgrounds, and other visitor service businesses and hundreds of homes and cabins.

In 2018, visitors to the wilderness area were estimated to contribute between 230 and 570 jobs and 6 million to 14.8 million in labor income all across this region, which we call the Arrowhead Region in Minnesota.

So I like that this is looking at the socioeconomics of this and kind of what are we going to do, how do we kind of maximize the benefit here.

I want to also just say I think it is important, because I always come back to this, the impacts on Tribes in Northern Minnesota. And this assessment points the following out: The lands proposed for withdrawal include the homeland and traditional use areas of the Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe, comprised of multiple independent bands living around Lake Superior and what is the northern parts of Minnesota.

And this, I think, is important. The Ojibwe bands were signatories of key treaties executed by the Federal Government in the 19th century. This withdrawal application area falls entirely within the 1854 ceded territory of the Lake Superior Chippewa from lands deemed to have been under the sole control of signatories at signing.

So every single thing that we are talking about here falls within the 1854 ceded territory, and this is not some historical document that is interesting to know about that has no impact on our daily life. This treaty is still in effect. It still establishes these hunting and fishing and wild rice harvesting rights that exist to this day. It still establishes the right that the Lake Superior Chippewa people, the Anishinaabe people of Northern Minnesota have around moose and deer and fish and berry and wild rice, their sugar bush sites, their maple stands, their white cedar stands, ducks, and other forest resources.

Of course, these resources are available to everybody, but they have a particular legal access point for the folks—for the Tribal nations. It is not known in many parts of the country, but in Minnesota, wild rice, manoomin, is a hugely important food source and also very important culturally to Native people, and it is a very important part of the ecosystem of this part of Minnesota.

And wild rice is a wetland plant that grows in exactly this kind of eco-

system, and it is, again, super important to the Ojibwe people. And this wild rice, it grows in very shallow freshwater marshes on the edges of lakes and rivers, and typically it grows only to about 3 feet high. And it is a very, very important part of what is included in these treaties. I think it is important to understand that.

As I go through this environmental assessment to share what it evaluates in terms of the opportunities in this area, what needs to be protected and what impacts you might see from the mine, I want to just share a little bit of that with you. I just need to find it here. This talks about—let me find it here.

Here we go. This is a good summary, I think, of what the environmental assessment finds. It says: The greatest potential risk to water quality of the wilderness area and lands within the withdrawal area comes from the catastrophic failure of a wet basin tailings storage or impoundment dam. Wet basin tailings storages pose the risk of dam failure and the potential release of a large volume of contaminated sediment or tailings into the water to a nearby water body, the potential transport of that downstream in water bodies and receptors.

Dam failures have the greatest potential of traveling downstream at a volume that could impact receding wilderness area water resources. Impacts would be most severe for streams and wetlands and lakes most adjacent to the failure. Failure would be highly likely to result in increases of total solids, sulfates, metal, or other constituents, exceedance of water quality standards, and observable impacts of aquatic bio and habitat in Birch Lake becoming successively less severe, of course, as the water moves forward.

But it assesses that the risk effects to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area would be significant and can't be—can't be—you know, mitigated in any way.

I think that that is the reason why this environmental assessment forms the basis for the mineral lease withdrawal. And, again, the mineral lease withdrawal is for 20 years, and 20 years seems like a long time. I have been in the Senate for 9 years—half of that time—but the idea here is that you don't want to lock these minerals up forever. That doesn't seem reasonable. But given what the technology is right now, given what we know about the environmental risks and what this kind of mining would do, something is going to have to change before this makes sense, before this is a risk worth taking.

And I believe that that is really—the message that I take out of this environmental assessment, along with, you know, the many hundreds of thousands of people who wrote in talking about this and saying why—why this mattered to them.

I think during the course of this discussion when we are talking about the

special place that this is, also talking about the unusual precedent, the remarkable and dangerous precedent that the CRA establishes should it pass and also talking about the special consideration that I think that we need to give to Native people who have particular and sovereign treaty rights related to this place.

And I want to just, if I can, take a minute to go over in a bit of detail what some of the Tribes have said about this because I think it gives a good impact—it gives a good sense of why this is important to them.

And let me just find this for you before I—while I am looking for that, I want to share these other things with you because I think they are helpful.

Senator HEINRICH spoke about this earlier, and it was really remarkable to me that as we were considering this CRA, as it was coming over from the House to the Senate, that we received here in the Senate an open letter from President Theodore Roosevelt's direct descendants talking about the importance of saving the Boundary Waters. I am going to just read this letter to make sure that people have had a chance to understand what it says.

The letter says: Dear United States Senators, the purpose of this letter is to strongly recommend all Senators vote against House Joint Resolution 140 and to ask you to work with President Trump to seek ways to permanently protect the Boundary Waters and to send a unified message that America is still a land that relentlessly protects its greatest wilderness terrain.

The proposed House resolution erroneously uses the Congressional Review Act to disallow the current withdrawal of over 225,000 acres and the headwaters of the Boundary Waters and would green-light exposure of this national treasure to the highly toxic and destructive impacts of sulfide-ore copper mining.

It is faulty on several key fronts. First, it is the opposite of "America First." The mining company in question is foreign-owned, will use Chinese state-owned smelters, and will then sell the extracted metals on the open market.

Next, it removes the American public from public land decision making. A key priority of American public land policy has always been to have a strong bias towards obtaining robust public input. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already weighed in on the Boundary Waters, and they overwhelmingly want it protected forever.

Next, it discards sound science. A detailed environmental assessment has already documented the substantial risk copper mining poses to this highly-valued ecosystem.

It sets a very bad precedent for other public lands. Using the CRA in this fashion, which has never been done before, would put at risk other public land withdrawals across America to

similarly irresponsible actions. Finally, the proposed resolution is diametrically at odds with the conservation legacy of President Theodore Roosevelt.

For all these reasons we feel a deep obligation to T.R.—as they call him in this letter—to speak out loudly in support of this exceptional American wilderness area.

As T.R. said at the Grand Canyon in 1903, we now reiterate with the Boundary Waters today “leave it as it is.” Vote no on House Joint Resolution 140 or any other similar legislation and seek creative ways to protect the Boundary Waters forever.

Frankly, T.R. would have been appalled at House Resolution 140 and the misguided and harmful effort to revoke sound and necessary mineral withdrawals in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters.

To understand T.R.’s perspective on all of this, it is important to review a little of his history starting with Minnesota.

T.R. had a strong affinity for Minnesota. T.R.’s love of Minnesota emanated directly from Lincoln and Grant’s leadership during the Civil War. Minnesota immediately stepped up to support the dire cause.

T.R. had a huge amount of respect for the 1st Minnesota Infantry Regiment, who literally saved the Union at Gettysburg. It is perhaps why, shortly after the Civil War, as a 10-year-old sitting in Germany, T.R. dreamed of proudly going to Minnesota someday. He hoped to get there when he was 14, and he cheered in his diary about the prospect: Hip, hip, hoorah.

In 1880, T.R.’s first extended hunting trip to the West brought him as far as the Red River in Moorhead, MN, way up in the northwestern quadrant of our State, where he briefly ducked into the Dakota Territory for the first time. From then on, T.R.’s strong historical connections and interest in Minnesota accelerated exponentially.

In 1838, he signed his first cattle ranching contract in Saint Paul. In the rest of the 1880s and in the 1890s, he crossed through the State on many memorable occasions.

In 1900, he launched his Vice Presidential campaign in Minnesota. In 1901, he gave his famous “Big Stick” speech at the Minnesota State Fair.

These are just a few small samplings of T.R.’s oversized affection for Minnesota, which helped to catapult him toward his destiny.

T.R. worked exceedingly hard to protect Minnesota’s forests and water. It should come as no surprise that T.R.’s appreciations for Minnesota translated into an aggressive pursuit of protecting the State’s favored forests and water.

In 1902, shortly after taking office, T.R. used scientific forestry to establish the Minnesota Forest Reserve, which was later renamed the Chippewa National Forest. It was the first national forest reserve in America east of the Mississippi River and the first one

set aside through an act of Congress, rather than by a Presidential proclamation.

Around the same timeframe, closer to America’s northern border, T.R.’s administration withdrew hundreds of thousands of acres in Lake and Cook Counties in the vicinity of the Boundary Waters to get a jump start on protecting this even more pristine source of water.

Finally, in 1909, for the public good, T.R. formally established the much broader Superior National Forest, where the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area resides.

Based on all of these proactive measures, there is no doubt T.R. wanted Minnesota’s greatest natural resource, its most beloved Boundary Waters ecosystem, protected in perpetuity for all future generations to enjoy. It was a central tenet of his balanced approach to conservationism.

Saving the Boundary Waters makes common, bipartisan sense. Because of the foresight of America’s early Republican leaders, the Boundary Waters has risen, as per the Department of the Interior, to become America’s most heavily visited wilderness area. Its greatness goes way beyond Minnesota. It is the fourth pillar of all of America’s greatest continental wilderness terrain—Yosemite, Lincoln and Harrison; Yellowstone, Grant; the Grand Canyon, Roosevelt; and the Boundary Waters.

Saving it from the devastating effects of copper mining is, therefore, the conservation imperative of our time and should be bipartisan in nature.

It is certainly bipartisan in Minnesota, as evidenced by the fact that 70 percent of Minnesotans want the Boundary Waters permanently protected. Minnesotans know, aside from the devastating impact on the environment, copper-nickel mining in the Boundary Waters would deal a crushing blow to a great rural American economy. It would kill jobs, dampen growth, decrease affordability, and erase any meaningful prospects for future economic prosperity in the region.

For all of these reasons, we are positive T.R. would want the Boundary Waters protected in a bipartisan fashion. But, sadly, the passage of H.J. Res. 140 in the House puts all of this in grave jeopardy.

Our specific ask of the United States Senators: To America’s Senators, please do all that you can to protect this national treasure. On both sides of the political aisle, we strongly ask you to vote no on this resolution and on any other similar legislation proposed in the future.

T.R. was active in the preserving of our greatest wilderness terrain on both the east and west coasts. It became one of the greatest enduring legacies of his life. It is now time for all of you to get in the arena with him.

We implore you to do your own parts to ensure T.R.’s commonsense approach to conservationism is as strong today as it was more than a century

ago. There is no better place to do this than to preserve the greatest wilderness terrain in the middle of America’s heartland: the Boundary Waters, the greatest “America 250” conservation gift, protecting the fourth pillar.

This letter concludes in this way: In conjunction with America’s 250th birthday, we ask you to honor President Theodore Roosevelt’s conservation legacy.

As T.R.’s Presidential Library formally opens in Medora, ND, on Independence Day, three pillars of T.R.’s life will take central stage: Leadership, conservation, and citizenship.

It is one thing for politicians to say they believe in these three pillars, and it is quite another to see them act that way. We humbly submit it would be hard to gift America a more meaningful fourth pillar, one that better unites these three aspects of his legacy, than a huge enduring present in the form of a permanently protected Boundary Waters.

Finally, it should be noted that the signatories below represent the three branches of Theodore Roosevelt’s family, emanating directly from his three sons, who all served in both World War I and World War II.

Quinton Roosevelt was, sadly, killed in action in World War I or he certainly would have risen to the call of service the second time.

The four of us below—this is important. The four of us below have never collectively cosigned a letter together, which should give an indication of how strongly we support voting no on this resolution and then voting yes on permanent Boundary Waters protection.

We greatly appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

This is signed by Theodore Roosevelt IV, Teddy Roosevelt’s great-grandson, and cosigned by Tweed Roosevelt, Kermit Roosevelt III, and Mark Roosevelt.

I think this is so interesting because, one, it speaks to the great tradition of conservationism in the Republican Party. And I love also that it highlights these other great pillars of American remarkable places. They talk about, in this letter, America’s greatest continental wilderness terrain: Yosemite, protected by Lincoln and Harrison; Yellowstone protected by Grant; the Grand Canyon and Roosevelt.

And, you know, just as it is impossible for us to imagine a big mine right on the doorstep of the Grand Canyon or Yosemite, it is impossible for us in Minnesota to imagine this mine right on the doorstep of the Boundary Waters. The Boundary Waters is the same caliber of national treasure as the Grand Canyon or Yosemite or Yellowstone.

And in this country, we certainly don’t say we don’t want to do any mining anywhere. But we also acknowledge that there are places that are so special, that that does not need to be the place where we look to meet our needs for precious metals, precious minerals.

I was searching, a moment ago, for—I had mentioned that I wanted to share some of the views of America's indigenous Tribes, talking about why they think that it is important to protect the Boundary Waters.

I have got a few here that I am going to read to you, and I am going to start with the letter from the National Congress of American Indians, which, as you no doubt know, is the oldest and largest organization of sovereign Tribal nations from around the country.

I am going to—this is actually not a letter. Forgive me. This is a resolution that the National Congress of American Indians put forward a few weeks ago, speaking on behalf of all of the Tribes, all of the Tribes that are members.

It is as follows. It is called: Calling on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to hold a hearing to consider and take testimony on H.J. Res 140, entitled, "Disapproving Public Land Order 7917" due to the impacted Tribal interests contained in the subject public land order.

It goes as follows:

Whereas we the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the designed blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign right of our Indian Nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values and otherwise promote the health, safety, and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

And whereas the National Congress of American Indians, NCAI, was established in 1944, and as the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments;

And whereas the Ojibwe people have resided in North America since time immemorial, and before the establishment of the United States, have resided among what has become the border between the United States and Canada and the places now called Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota;

And whereas the Ojibwe people entered into numerous treaties with the United States, ceding land and reserving rights within those lands in exchange for peace, protection, and services, including the Treaty of La Pointe, September 30, 1854;

And whereas in the 1834 treaty, the Ojibwe reserved rights to hunt, fish, and gather within the territory ceded in the 1854 ceded territory, and such rights remain intact and are presently exercised by the current beneficiaries of the 1854 treaty;

And whereas, over time, the Federal Government took land within the ceded territory for conservation and protection, including the Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, both within the Rainy River Watershed, which runs along the current United States-Canada border and what is now North-eastern Minnesota;

And whereas the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is a globally unique freshwater ecosystem with some of the world's cleanest water—it comprises 20 percent of the freshwater within the entire National Forest System. And through its interconnected system of lakes, forests, and wetlands, provides irreplaceable habitat for threatened species like the lynx and the loons, and, by doing so, offers invaluable and cultural recreational resources, including resources that the Ojibwe utilize when exercising their reserved treaty rights;

And whereas, as recognized in the NCAI resolution on FDA O2510, wild rice, manomin, is the sacred food of the Ojibwe people, integral to their identity and necessary for their subsistence, and the Federal Government must protect the waters of the 1854 ceded territory from contamination to maintain traditional harvesting of wild rice, which, as the Ojibwe treaty guaranteed, are usufructuary rights;

And whereas, on January 31, 2023, then Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland issued Public Land Order 7917, withdrawing approximately 225,504 acres of National Forest System lands from disposition under the United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws for a period of 20 years to protect and preserve the 1854 ceded territory of the Lake Superior Chippewa in Northern Minnesota from the political adverse effects of mineral and geothermal exploration and development;

And whereas the order further provides that the purpose for the withdrawal is also to protect the health, traditional cultural values, and subsistence-based lifestyle of the Tribal nations that rely on resources in the region, such as wild rice, which are particularly susceptible to adverse impacts associated with mineral exploration and development;

And whereas NCAI acknowledges that any threats to Tribal rights and treaty rights of one Tribal nation erodes the reserved Tribal and treaty rights of all Tribal nations, thereby eroding Tribal sovereignty;

And whereas H.J. Res. 140, introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on January 12, 2026, authorizes the disapproval of Public Land Order 7917;

And whereas the U.S. House of Representatives enacted H.J. Res. 140 without a hearing and without soliciting input from the impacted parties, including from the Tribal nations whose treaty rights are impacted by the disapproval;

And whereas pursuant to the rules of the Congressional Review Act adoption

and enactment of H.J. Res. 140 would permanently preclude any future consideration or action by the executive branch, forever stripping the impacted Tribal nations of their right to be consulted prior to Federal actions that materially impact their lives, lands, and interests;

And whereas H.J. Res. 140 has been transmitted to the U.S. Senate and because disapproval of the underlying public land order directly impacts more than one federally recognized Tribe's treaty guaranteed rights, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs should hold a hearing on Public Land Order 7917 in order to solicit testimony from the impacted Tribal nations before Senate floor consideration;

Now therefore be it resolved that NCAI urges the U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee to expeditiously schedule a hearing regarding the contents of Public Land Order 7917 and the potential detrimental impact adopting H.J. Res. 140 would have on treaty rights by soliciting testimony from the Tribal nations impacted.

And be it further resolved that NCAI insists that the administration and the Congress protect the unique ecosystems of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from contamination and encroachment, which is the underlying purpose of Public Land Order 7917.

And be it finally resolved that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by any subsequent resolution.

Now, I think this is important for a couple of reasons.

One, this is such an important organization reflecting so many Tribal nations. It is important also that they are saying clearly that they believe that the public land order in place right now is protecting their Tribal sovereignty and treaty rights as they should be protected.

The resolution is also saying, if you are going to take such a dramatic step, U.S. Senate, you ought to at least have a hearing in the Senate Indian Affairs Committee to create an opportunity for Tribal nations to express their views on this.

Of course, that hearing hasn't happened. Because the CRA came before the Senate as a privileged resolution, it was not possible to refer this to the committee during these processes that were going on. There are so many things that the Senate is limited from doing because of the form in which the House sent this resolution over to the Senate; but I think it is a travesty that, at the very least, a hearing exploring the impacts on Tribal nations will not have been held before Members of the Senate are to make a decision that has such a significant impact on treaty rights and Tribal nations in Minnesota. As this letter says, what impacts one Tribal nation impacts all Tribal nations in this environment, in this situation.

Having the support of the National Congress of American Indians is extremely important, but I also want to just note that the Minnesota Chippewa Tribes—that all of the Chippewa Tribes in Northern Minnesota have also expressed their strong disapproval of this action that the Senate is contemplating tonight. So I am going to read the letter that the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe sent to Senator KLOBUCHAR and me so that everyone will—so that it will also be in the RECORD.

Here is the letter, which was written on March 4, my birthday. It's to Senator TINA SMITH and Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR. Re: Vote No on Mining in and around the Boundary Waters: Dear Senators Smith and Klobuchar, I write at the direction of the leadership of the six bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe—otherwise MCT—all of which are federally recognized Indian Tribes under the umbrella of the MCT.

As you know, in January, H.J. Res. 140 passed the House and rolls back the 20-year ban on mining in and around the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and within the Superior National Forest in Minnesota. The MCT strongly opposes any mining in that area and asks that you vote no on any companion bill in the Senate, and we thank you both for your public statements to date in opposition of this destructive measure.

Members of those MCT bands who were signatories to the 1854 Treaty of La Pointe, which encompasses the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, retain the right to enter millions of acres in the Arrowhead region of Minnesota to exercise their treaty reserved rights to hunt and fish and gather.

The entire area is Ojibwe homeland. In fact, one of the key purposes of the Bureau of Land Management order withdrawing the Superior National Forest lands from potential mineral and geothermal leasing was to protect and preserve the fragile and vital socio-natural resources, ecological integrity, and wilderness values from the potential diverse effects of mineral and geothermal exploration and development. The 1854 ceded territory was expressly called out as one of the areas that must be protected.

The letter includes a map of the ceded territory, and the letter concludes by saying: Again, we appreciate your opposition to lifting the mining ban and your support of Tribes in this region. Thank you.

I have here also letters from the White Earth Indian Reservation expressing their opposition to mining in or near the Boundary Waters Wilderness.

I have a letter from the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes, and all of the Anishinaabe Tribes across Minnesota and Wisconsin are all relatives.

This is another letter basically saying: We are writing to you today on an issue of utmost importance to all of our members. It is our understanding

that the House joint resolution may soon be brought to the floor. This resolution is a measure brought under the Congressional Review Act to repeal a current rule banning copper-sulfide mining. We urge you and your colleagues to vote no on this measure.

I have here a letter from the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, which is a Wyoming Tribe, sent to Senator LUMMIS, Senator THUNE, and also to Senator SCHUMER and Senator BARRASSO. It includes opposition, saying clearly, on behalf of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council, it urges the Senate to oppose H.J. Res. 140.

I have a letter from the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation urging opposition to this resolution.

I have a letter from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe from Rosebud, SD, urging opposition to this CRA.

I have here a letter from early February to all of the Members of the Senate, and I am just going to read you a bit of it, but I think what I want you to know is that, at the end of this letter, it is signed by—I mean, my word. I would have to count them all up—I would guess, 40 or 50 small businesses in Minnesota. Many of them are from the area—you know, they benefit so much from the natural resources of Northern Minnesota and from the outdoor recreation economy of Northern Minnesota.

They are urging the U.S. Senate to oppose H.J. Res. 140, and I am just going to read you a bit of it.

It says: The Boundary Waters and downstream Voyageurs National Park are currently protected by Public Land Order 7917—the 20-year mineral withdrawal banning copper and nickel mining on Federal public lands in the headwaters of these beloved wildlands. This mining ban is 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 region's watershed, fish, and wildlife, treaty and Tribal rights, and robust recreation economy.

The analysis completed by the Forest Service in 2022 included 675,000 public comments, over 95 percent of which favored protecting the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs from sulfide-ore copper mining. Overturning the mining ban puts at risk the forests and the clean waters of the region as well as its town's indigenous communities and the regional economy.

The love for the Boundary Waters powers a strong and enduring recreation economy in Northeastern Minnesota—responsible for 17,000 jobs and over \$1 billion in sales annually in the region. This includes the many businesses many of us have created and grown which will be seriously damaged if sulfide-ore copper mining were allowed in this fragile environment.

The wilderness is also a crown jewel of Minnesota and important to the State's growing \$13.5 billion outdoor economy. Economic studies show that

protecting the Boundary Waters would be better for the economy than opening the area to copper mining.

The letter goes on to say: 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, vibrant wilderness communities, and sustainable local economies. Generations of Midwesterners and Americans from across the country have formed deep connections to nature through hunting and fishing and camping and canoeing and hiking in the Boundary Waters.

We urge you to vote no on H.J. Res. 140. Do not sell out our wilderness, our way of life, and our businesses.

This letter is signed by—and I won't read all of the people who have signed it—Ely Outfitting in Ely, MN; Freedom Explorer; the Lodge of Whispering Pines; River Point Resort; Wilderness Cabins; Piragis Northwoods Company; Voyager Outward Bound School; North of North Resort; Ely Cabin Collective; Final Touch Proofreading and Editing.

I am sure there are, you know, advertising and marketing jobs connected to the Boundary Waters.

White Pine Productions. All of these are in Ely, MN.

Then there are many others: North Shore Adventure Park in Silver Bay; Big City Mountaineers in Tower; Granite Gear in Two Harbors; Madison Elyse, LLC, in Alexandria; Littlebug Enterprises in Bemidji; Java Moose in Grand Marais; the Fisherman's Daughter in Grand Marais.

I mean, there are dozens of businesses that are listed here, and I think this just goes to show how the outdoor recreation economy powers these small businesses. They are the employers and the drivers of Minnesota's economy. So listening to them and hearing what they have to say as we make this decision is just so important.

The hour grows late, and I know we have people who have been here all day long, so I am going to take a couple of—a bit more of the time that I have—5 hours all in—on this extremely important topic just to talk a little bit more about some of the feedback that I have gotten from Minnesotans before I wrap up tonight.

Here is something that I think is really an important and interesting note that I have gotten from Lakeville, MN.

This person says the following: I moved to Minnesota over a decade ago from Chicago. As someone born in Iowa, I visited Minnesota often. When making the decision to move to Minnesota, a huge draw for us was outdoors. We visit the Boundary Waters Canoe Area every year, and my kids know the feeling of a great hike and the beautiful scenery to go with it. If this resolution passes Congress, not only will my grandchildren not be able to enjoy this beautiful place, but my kids will watch it disappear before

their eyes. Please protect this land, protect beauty, and protect the feeling of a great hike.

This is a letter from Lake Elmo, MN. It is very short.

She says: I am a 79-year-old woman who goes to the BWCA with my kids and grandchildren. Chilean mining in the area will hurt the tour industry.

Thank you for sending that.

I will read a couple more here before I close.

This is from St. Augusta, MN, and it says: I am a 45-year resident of Minnesota. I am an Eagle Scout, husband, and father of three daughters. I have been an outdoor enthusiast from a very early age—deer hunting with extended family and camping with the Scouts. When my daughters were old enough, I began planning annual trips into the BWCA for 4 to 6 days, acquiring all of the equipment necessary and passing on my knowledge and appreciation of the outdoors, hoping that, one day, they will take up the mantle with our children and help protect these critical ecosystems. I also require that no phones or electronic devices accompany us on our BW adventures—something my daughters label as a technology detox and, in my opinion, provides a type of reset against an increasingly technological existence.

Here is a note from somebody from Big Lake, MN: I am Minnesota born and raised. I grew up in a Republican household with a father who showed me all the true beauty and wonder of this State through fishing, hunting, foraging, and camping. The land that makes up this State and all the creatures and features within it have given me a purpose and a mission. I went to college at Gustavus Adolphus, where I studied the environment, and I got a job there guiding others on how to enjoy the outdoors and invest in protecting the wonderful State that gives them these opportunities.

I have seen the impact firsthand on how countless times people's whole worlds have changed when they are introduced to the beauty and recreation of the Land of 10,000 Lakes, of which you are representing me.

If I could sit down with you face-to-face, Mr. EMMER, you would see the absolute fear in my eyes at the prospect of losing more wild areas than we already have. And I can assure you that sentiment is shared by a vast majority of Minnesotans. No matter what side of the aisle people are on, they can unite over the unique beauty and foundational importance that our ecosystems have, not only on the very water we drink and the air that we breathe but in the foundation for pride in our chest when we beam that we are from Minnesota.

I sincerely urge you to consider this deeply, to talk to those you represent about the impact that this would have, and to take heed to science. This isn't

about me. This is about every little kid who is growing up or who is about to be born in this great State. Will they still hold that pride in their chest when they declare where they are from if the very thing that makes us Minnesotans is ripped away from them?

Already I have taught young people who have never seen an unobstructed night sky or know what it is like to catch a firefly. I have taught young people who know what it is like to fish at a lake their grandfather recommended and to catch nothing because the fish are gone and hear nothing but machinery instead of loon calls while they are out. Please, I am begging you on behalf of all our legacies, please fight for us.

Mr. President, I think I wanted to just clarify that this letter was forwarded to me, but it was sent to Congressman EMMER of Minnesota, and this Minnesotan is begging him to listen and fight.

Here is a letter from a Minnesotan that says: I am devastated to learn that the U.S. House of Representatives has voted to repeal the longstanding ban on mining near the Boundary Waters. I have been going on yearly BWCA trips with my mom since 2009, when I was 10 years old. I am now 27, and she is now 70, and we plan to continue our annual tradition for as long as we can. Though I haven't yet started a family, my mom has always hoped she will be around to introduce her future grandchildren to this beautiful wilderness. I now fear, though, that the Boundary Waters themselves won't be around for my children to enjoy.

My mom raised me to care for nature, to leave each BWCA campsite cleaner than I found it, and it grieves me that I am powerless to preserve the Boundary Waters beyond these small actions.

When we go on our 2026 trip, I will continue to treat each campsite and portage and lake with respect and love. I can only hope that those with power in this country can, from afar, do the same.

I don't think I could possibly read all of the letters and messages that have come from Minnesota to me over the last many months about this, and you may be wondering why I am standing here at nearly midnight keeping everybody up, and here is why: because I know there are so many people in Minnesota who are wondering—excuse me. I am losing my voice. I know there are so many people in Minnesota who are wondering whether anybody in this building cares about what they think, and the one thing that I can do is to be here, speaking to this mostly empty room, making sure that, to the best of my abilities, that their voices will be heard. Their voices will be heard, regardless of what the Senate does.

I dearly hope that the Members of this body will think about their legacy

in protecting the great places in this country, to think about the risks—there are risks in this time that you must take, but then there are other risks like the risk of polluting this beautiful place that is not necessary. It is not necessary to take.

And I hope that my colleagues will also think about the precedent that taking this action will take and the ways in which other politicians down the road will look back on the actions that this Senate is taking right now and saying: They gave us permission to do the same thing because they said it was OK. And that will have impacts not only on the Boundary Waters, this precious place, but it will have impacts on precious places all over the country, and it will have impacts on the overall integrity of our government if actions that are taken that are legal can just be undone willy-nilly. And that just seems to me to be so bad for this body, to be bad for the public lands that we all love, and to be bad for this country that we all love so much.

So I stand here tonight with a mostly gone voice to give voice to all of those people in my home State and in States all over this country who feel like what they think doesn't really matter, and I am here to tell you that it does. And the power of the organizing that has happened over the last many weeks to raise up this issue in the face of a time in our country when there are so many issues that demand so much attention: a war in Iran, the brutal attacks on my home State of Minnesota by Federal agents, so many worries, so many worries that so many people have in this country right now—worries, fundamentally, about how they are going to put food on the table and how they are going to pay rent and how they are going to hold their lives together. But they organized to make sure that their voices were heard on this thing that they care so much about, and so it has been my honor and also my responsibility and my obligation to help to lift those voices up tonight.

Tomorrow, I believe the Senate will vote on this, and I hope that the Senate makes a good decision—a good decision not only for my home State of Minnesota and for this precious place but also for the good of the whole, for the good of the whole country, and the protection of our public lands and the integrity of our democracy.

I yield the floor.

RECESS UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:38 p.m., recessed until Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 10 a.m.