

PROTECTING THE BOUNDARY WATERS

Executive Order 26-10

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) is one of Minnesota's greatest treasures and a national asset. It offers pristine waters, abundant fish and wildlife, and vast wilderness teeming with biodiversity.

As the most visited wilderness area in the United States, the BWCAW sustains a vibrant local economy of outfitters, youth camps, resorts, guides, small businesses, and more. But after years of environmental protection at the federal level, Congress and the Trump Administration stripped protections for the region. Protecting the lakes and rivers of the Rainy River Headwaters Watershed (RRHW) that flow into the BWCAW is essential to its health and viability, as well as to the lifeways of the Tribal Nations and Ojibwe communities who share geography with Minnesota.

Governor Tim Walz is using his executive authority to protect Minnesota's cherished BWCAW from renewed threats, preserving it for generations to come.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will:

- Not undertake any environmental review or permit work associated with proposals for nonferrous mineral mining in the RRHW until the resolution of the *Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness v. DNR* litigation and rulemaking.
- Not participate as a cooperating agency in any federal environmental review of any proposed nonferrous mining project in the RRHW.
- Not offer any new state nonferrous mineral leases in the RRHW.
- Not offer any new state surface leases for nonferrous mining operations in the RRHW.
- Review all existing state nonferrous mineral leases located within the RRHW and strictly enforce compliance with the terms of those leases to the fullest extent of the law.
- Draft legislative language prohibiting nonferrous mining in the RRHW for consideration as part of the agency's budget and policy development process.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency will:

- Not undertake any environmental review or permit work associated with proposals for nonferrous mineral mining in the RRHW until the resolution of the *Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness v. DNR* litigation and rulemaking.



Office of Governor Tim Walz &
Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan