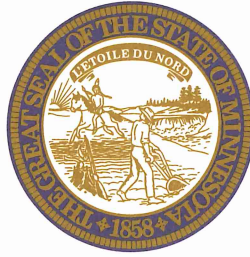


Roger J. Skraba
State Representative
District 03A



Minnesota House of Representatives

August 15, 2024

Commissioner Sarah Strommen
Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155

Commissioner Strommen,

We the undersigned members of the Iron Range Delegation, representing the entirety of the Northeast region of Minnesota, write to you today in opposition to the proposed sale of 80,000 acres of state land within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) to the federal government.

Our opposition is two-fold.

First, we question the authority of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and U.S. Forest Service to complete this sale without legislative approval and without exchanging the land, acre-for-acre, as described in *Public Law 88-577 88th Congress, S. 4 Sept. 3, 1964: Sec. 5. (a)*.

This section of law reads as follows:

"...State-owned land or privately owned land shall be exchanged for federally owned land in the same State of approximately equal value under authorities available to the Secretary of Agriculture."

Therefore, the proposed purchase is in violation of federal law and a land exchange should be pursued instead.

Second, we are concerned about the limiting effect a one-time sale of School Trust Lands would have on the long-term viability of the Permanent School Fund. We are strong supporters of the Fund's work and know the positive impact it has on schools in our region and around the state. Over the years, these dollars have been instrumental in helping build and maintain the high standards Minnesotans expect from their public schools.

While the price of the proposed land sale is still not known, any one-time payment pales in comparison to ongoing revenues that would be generated for the Permanent School Fund if these lands are exchanged for federally owned lands where economic activity may occur.

Simply selling these lands to the federal government is not only legally dubious, but financially short sighted as well. Beyond simple dollars and cents, a one-off sale further limits communities' ability to have a say in how the land around them is managed, maintained, and leaves out their voice in determining its future use.



We ask that you put this proposed sale on hold and work with us to determine the best path forward that complies with federal and state law, provides ongoing financial stability for the Permanent School Fund.

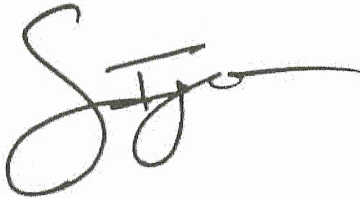
Sincerely,



Roger J. Skraba
State Representative 3A



Ben Davis
State Representative 6A



Spencer Igo
State Representative 7A



Justin D. Eichorn
State Senator District 6



Robert D. Farnsworth
State Senator District 7