

PROTECT PUBLIC LANDS IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA

**Amy Klobuchar's bill sells National Forest land
to a mining company ... but are you a willing seller?**

Legislation from Senator Amy Klobuchar would authorize the Forest Service to sell 6,700 acres of public land in northern Minnesota to a Canadian-owned mining corporation for a copper-nickel strip mine. The sale would be conducted without the necessary consideration of the public's interest and without the safeguards needed to protect Minnesota's environment.

WHY IS THIS LEGISLATION PROPOSED?

To circumvent the normal process by which National Forest land is transferred to private entities. The mining company controls the mineral rights of this land, but the Forest Service owns the surface rights. The Forest Service can not allow the mining company to construct a strip mine on this land. As a result, the mining company needs to own the surface rights before its mine can move forward. Such a transfer is normally done through a land exchange, which requires environmental review and assurance that the swap is in the public's interest.

THE PLAYERS

Senators Amy Klobuchar and Norm Coleman and Representative James Oberstar: Minnesota's elected officials who have introduced this legislation in the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively.

PolyMet Mining Corp.: A Canadian-owned mining company seeking to operate the first sulfide mine in Minnesota.

U.S. Forest Service: The federal agency entrusted with managing our public National Forest lands.

THIS BILL IS BAD PUBLIC POLICY BECAUSE IT WOULD...

... carve out **an exception to existing law** for a single private corporation rather than allowing an existing and tested land exchange process to move forward.

... **divest public land** without analysis of public interest, or environmental review of the sale.

... create **a dangerous precedent** for giveaway of National Forest lands in Minnesota to mining companies while mineral exploration is increasing on the Superior National Forest, much of which is near the BWCAW.

... provide **a huge windfall to a private corporation** while the Forest Service divests itself of its responsibility to oversee mining on public lands.

WHAT ARE THE MINING COMPANY'S OPTIONS?

PolyMet has several options other than this legislation. First, it could take advantage of a long-established and well-tested land exchange process. This process would allow the company to swap lands with the Forest Service, while ensuring that there is adequate environmental review and that the exchange benefits the public.

Alternatively, the mining company could modify its mining proposal. While the Forest Service cannot allow a strip mine, it also can't prohibit mining altogether. The mining company could propose a deep mine, or other variation, that would have a much smaller "footprint" than the current proposal and would therefore be allowable under the law.

LEARN MORE

Call Brian Pasko, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness Policy Director, at **612-332-9630** or brian@friends-bwca.org.

www.friends-bwca.org/mining

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

info@friends-bwca.org | 612-332-9630

GET INVOLVED!

- Contact Senate leadership:
 - Sen. Jeff Bingaman, Energy Committee: (202) 224-5521
 - Sen. Tom Harkin, Agriculture Committee: (202) 224-3254
- Contact Minnesota's elected officials:
 - Rep. James Oberstar: (202) 225-6211
 - Sen. Amy Klobuchar: (202) 224-3244
 - Sen. Norm Coleman: (202) 224-5641
- Send a letter to the editor of your newspaper expressing your concerns about this legislation. Contact us if you need information or resources.
- Talk to your peers about this bill and sulfide mining in Minnesota.