

*An Open Letter from
President Theodore Roosevelt's Direct Descendants
to United States Senators
on Saving the Boundary Waters*

February 6, 2026

Dear United States Senators:

The purpose of this letter is to strongly recommend all Senators vote against H.J. Res. 140, 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 (CRA) to disallow the current withdrawal of over 225,000 acres in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters and would greenlight exposure of this national treasure to the highly toxic and destructive impacts of sulfide-ore copper mining. It is faulty on several key fronts:

- ***It's 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.
- ***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 toward obtaining robust public input. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already weighed in on the Boundary Waters – and they overwhelmingly want it protected forever.
- ***It Disregards 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 (TR). For all these reasons we feel a deep obligation to TR to speak out loudly in support of this exceptional American wilderness area. As TR said at the Grand Canyon in 1903, we now reiterate with the Boundary Waters today: "Leave it as it is." Vote no on H.J. Res. 140, or any other similar legislation, and seek creative ways to protect the Boundary Waters forever. Frankly, TR would be appalled at H.J. Res. 140 and the misguided and harmful effort to revoke a sound and necessary mineral withdrawal in the headwaters of the Boundary Waters. To understand TR's perspective on all this, it's important to review a little of his history, starting with Minnesota.

TR had a Strong Affinity for Minnesota!

TR'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. TR had a huge amount of

respect for the First Minnesota Regiment, who literally saved the Union at Gettysburg. It's perhaps why, shortly after the Civil War as a ten-year-old sitting in Germany, TR dreamed of proudly going to Minnesota someday. He hoped to get there when he was fourteen and cheered in his diary about the prospects: "hip, hip, hurrah!"

In 1880, TR's first extended hunting trip to the West brought him as far as the Red River in Moorhead, Minnesota, when he also briefly ducked into the Dakota Territory for the first time. From then on, TR's strong historical connections and interest in Minnesota accelerated exponentially – in 1883 he signed his first cattle ranching contract in St. Paul; in the rest of 1880s and into the 1890s he crossed through the state on many memorable occasions; in 1900, he launched his Vice-Presidential campaign in Minnesota; and in 1901, he gave his famous Big Stick speech at the Minnesota State Fair. These are just a small sampling of TR's oversized affections for Minnesota, which helped to catapult him toward his destiny.

TR Worked Exceedingly Hard To Protect Minnesota's Forests and Water!

It should come as no surprise that TR's appreciations for Minnesota translated into an aggressive pursuit of protecting the state's favored forests and water. In 1902, shortly after taking office, TR 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 Presidential Proclamation. Around that same timeframe, closer to America's northern border, TR's Administration withdrew hundreds of thousands of acres in Lake and Cook counties (in the vicinity of the Boundary Waters) to get a jumpstart on protecting this even more pristine source of water. Finally, in 1909, for "the public good," TR formally established the much broader Superior National Forest, where the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area resides. Based on all of these proactive measures, there's no doubt TR 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 tenant 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/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 70% of Minnesotans want the Boundary Waters permanently protected. Minnesotans know, aside from the devastating impact on the environment, copper 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 these reasons, we are positive TR 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 United States Senators

To America's Senators, please do all 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 any other similar legislation proposed in the future. TR was active in preserving 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 TR's common sense approach to conservationism is as strong today as it was more than a century ago. There is no better way 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

In conjunction with America's 250th birthday, we ask you to honor President Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy. As TR's Presidential Library formally opens in Medora, North Dakota on Independence Day, three pillars of TR's life will take central stage: Leadership, Conservation, and Citizenship. It's one thing for politicians to say they believe in these three pillars, and it's quite another thing to 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 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. Quentin Roosevelt was sadly Killed In Action in World War I, or he certainly would have also risen to the call of service a second time. The four of us below have never collectively co-signed 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 request.

Sincerely,



Theodore Roosevelt IV
TR's Great Grandson
Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. Branch

Co-Signers (Relationship to TR) – Branch of Family

Tweed Roosevelt (Great Grandson) – *Archie Roosevelt Branch*

Kermit Roosevelt III (Great Great Grandson) – *Kermit Roosevelt Branch*

Mark Roosevelt (Great Grandson) – *Kermit Roosevelt Branch*