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## Risks to Human Health from Sulfide-Ore Copper Mining

Twin Metals Minnesota and other sulfide-ore copper mines proposed near the Boundary Waters would be located in the heart of where thousands of people live, work and play. The human health impact of proposed sulfide-ore copper mines must be fully evaluated to prevent creating major threats to public health.

- Sulfide-ore copper mining has the potential to release numerous chemicals known to negatively affect human health, including mercury, arsenic, lead, asbestos-like fibers, and air pollution.
- These chemicals are included in the World Health Organization's "top 10 chemicals of major public health concern."
- Communities must be proactive in asking how sulfide-ore copper mining projects would affect human health instead of scrambling to address human health impacts after they have already occurred.
- A public health impact assessment for the first sulfide-ore copper mine project proposed in Minnesota, PolyMet, was called for by:
  - Minnesota Medical Association,
  - Minnesota Nurses Association,
  - Minnesota Department of Health,
  - Minnesota Public Health Association,
  - More than 150 health providers.
- On April 15, 2015, the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) adopted a resolution at its annual House of Delegates meeting that highlighted concerns over the public health impacts of sulfide-ore copper mining proposals.
  - The Minnesota Association of Family Physicians represents more than 3,000 family physicians, family medicine residents and medical students.
  - The Lake Superior Chapter of the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians submitted the resolution, which passed unanimously among at the statewide meeting.
  - The resolution reads:

*Resolution #3: Request for Health Risk Assessment of Sulfide Mining in Northeastern Minnesota*

*BE IT RESOLVED, that the MAFP requests that a Human Health Risk Assessment be performed using the most current scientific modeling methods to evaluate the health effects of the by-products of proposed [sulfide-ore] mining projects, and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the MAFP supports the subsequent completion of a Human Health Impact Assessment for [sulfide-ore] mining projects so that both health professionals and the public can make informed decision.*

