

September ____, 2017

Kathleen Atkinson, Regional Forester
U.S. Forest Service, Eastern Regional Office
626 East Wisconsin Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

**Re: Superior National Forest – Minnesota School Trust Lands
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
Land & Water Conservation Funding proposal**

Dear Ms. Atkinson:

I am writing to express my support for the Superior National Forest's FY2019 request for \$15 million in LWCF "Core" funding. This \$15 million request would fund "Phase 2" of Minnesota school trust lands located within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

Minnesota School Trust Lands were set aside in 1858 to support the State's public education system. However, the 83,000 acres of school trust lands within the BWCAW have been prohibited from providing any economic support since 1964. Minnesota, Superior National Forest, and interested stakeholders devised a strategy to address this in 2010. The "Hybrid Model" combines the Forest Service's purchase of 53,000 acres with an exchange of 30,000 acres. Minnesota's school trust beneficiaries—850,000 K-12 public school children—deserve the benefits from the lands that were granted to Minnesota at statehood for the support of public education.

LWCF Core funding of \$15 million is an essential component to complete an acquisition of 15,000 acres of school trust lands, would signify a major step on a path toward settling this long-standing land management issue and fulfilling the federal government's promise to the State of Minnesota at the time the BWCAW was created. This is why I support the Superior National Forest's LWCF FY2019 Core funding request.

Sincerely,

[Name]

cc: Tom Tidwell, Chief, U.S. Forest Service
Connie Cummins, Supervisor, Superior National Forest
Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Al Franken
Congressman Tim Walz
Congressman Jason Lewis
Congressman Erik Paulsen
Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Congressman Keith Ellison
Congressman Tom Emmer
Congressman Collin Peterson
Congressman Rick Nolan
Tom Landwehr, Commissioner Dept. of Natural Resources
Aaron Vande Linde, School Trust Lands Director