

Subject Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW)

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Summary

This bill would prohibit the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from selling any state-owned land located in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), a federally designated wilderness area within the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota along the international border.

The DNR, the Minnesota Office of School Trust Lands (OSTL), and the United States Forest Service (Forest Service) are currently working on a proposal that includes the Forest Service purchasing approximately 80,000 acres of school trust lands within the BWCAW. This proposal replaced a previous proposal for the exchange of approximately 30,000 acres between the state and the Forest Service and approximately 50,000 acres between the state and The Conservation Fund (TCF).

This bill, which consists of a statutory ban on selling state-owned land in the BWCAW and the repeal of a provision passed in 2012 that allows the DNR to sell land within the BWCAW by private sale to the United States, would become effective the day following enactment.