

m1 MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF SCHOOL TRUST LANDS

March 10, 2025

Honorable Josh Heintzeman
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
658 Cedar Street, Centennial Office Building, 2nd Floor
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: House File 1425 (Skraba)

Dear Chair Heintzeman

As Minnesota's School Trust Lands Director, I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to House File 1425 (Skraba) that seeks to prohibit the sale of approximately 80,000 acres of school trust lands within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

The statutory goal of the Permanent School Fund is to "secure the maximum long-term economic returns from the school trust lands consistent with the fiduciary responsibilities ... established in the constitution[.]" ([See Minn. Stat. sec. 127A.31](#)) Since the 1964 passage of the Wilderness Act, Minnesota school trust beneficiaries have received no revenue from the 80,000 acres of school trust lands within the BWCAW. Minnesota leaders, for decades, have attempted to resolve this issue in favor of school trust beneficiaries to no avail.

Then, in 2010, the Minnesota Senate passed [Resolution No. 1](#) recommending a hybrid exchange-sale model based on a recommendation from the Permanent School Fund Advisory committee. The legislature subsequently passed two laws to expedite both the exchange ([see Minn. Stat. 92.80](#)) and land sale ([see Minn. Stat. sec. 92.82](#)) with the federal government. The State and USDA Forest Service made significant progress on the hybrid exchange-sale model until 2022 when both determined not to proceed with a one-third land exchange.

With no viable land exchange, the Office of School Trust Lands was asked to analyze the long-term economic benefits to school trust beneficiaries should the state proceed with a full sale of the estimated 80,000 acres of school trust lands. The analysis demonstrates that investing sale proceeds produces greater long-term benefits for school kids as opposed to investing in a land exchange. The Return-on-Investment analysis produced for the legislative Permanent School Fund Commission is attached for reference. ([See "PSF.bwcaw.roi.memo.pdf"](#)).

Finalizing a land sale will result in millions of dollars deposited into the Permanent School Fund. This investment will support the state's public education system in perpetuity, fulfilling our fiduciary duty to ensure that both current and future beneficiaries receive maximum economic returns from school trust assets.

Sincerely,



Aaron M. Vande Linde
School Trust Lands Director