

University of St. Thomas

Member Information

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Degree</u>
Kelly Houlehan	2020	M.B.A., Corporate Strategy
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Advisor(s): Jason Skirry, Susan Marsnik

Topic: Treasures Above, Riches Below: Copper-Nickel Mining in Northern Minnesota

Division: Graduate

Audience: Minnesota Governor Walz and his cabinet

Executive Summary

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is an untouched nature area in northern Minnesota along the Canadian border. It is a 1.1 million acre wilderness that is home to numerous wildlife and a nature destination for more than 250,000 people annually. Today, it's under threat from proponents of copper-nickel mining.

Twin Metals Minnesota, a subsidiary of a Chilean mining conglomerate, is pursuing a copper-nickel mine just five miles outside of the Boundary Waters. Twin Metals claims that their technology will mitigate any environmental risk, but this technology remains untested. More importantly, its parent company is responsible for numerous toxic spills and the biggest loss of cultural heritage in Chile's recent history. When this is what they do to their own home, how can we trust them with ours?

The debate continues as to whether the benefits of the mine outweigh the risks of mining so close to the Boundary Waters. Is it worth the risk? Can we trust Twin Metals?

Upon evaluation, our consulting firm believes that the better solution for the region is to pursue a public-private partnership and attract a corporate headquarters to the area, bringing jobs and a reinvestment in the existing recreation and tourism industries.