

Support for the Purchase and Exchange of School Trust Lands in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Proceeding in Tandem

WHEREAS, Minnesota’s School Trust Lands were granted by the United States to Minnesota at statehood, with the intent to provide a source of continued revenue, now and into the future, for public schools; and

WHEREAS, approximately 83,000 acres of the School Trust Lands have been locked up in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and unable to generate revenue for the trust for over 50 years; and

WHEREAS, the Superior National Forest, by agreement with the State of Minnesota, manages these lands as interwoven fabric of the BWCAW landscape; and

WHEREAS there are limitations imposed by the Wilderness Act directly conflicting with State law that directs School Trust Lands management to “secure the maximum long-term economic return”; and

WHEREAS a Hybrid Model has been adopted that includes a combination of land sale and exchange to transfer School Trust Lands located in the BWCAW to the United States Forest Service (USFS); and

WHEREAS a Plan B has been developed as a three-step proposal to accomplish the purchase component of the Hybrid Model whereby the Conservation Fund would 1) purchase private forest lands in St. Louis County, and 2) exchange the parcels for School Trust Lands located in the BWCAW, and 3) the USFS would then buy the former School Trust Lands from the Conservation Fund with funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and

WHEREAS it is valued by multiple stakeholders that the purchase and exchange of school trust lands proceed on similar timelines; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that **FOREST LAKE AREA SCHOOLS** supports a combination of land sale and exchange to transfer School Trust Lands located in the BWCAW to the USFS using the Plan B model to ensure that thousands of acres of private forest land in northern Minnesota will be transferred to the School Trust. Plan B is an alternative that provides for a continued source of revenue for Minnesota schools, allowing for a sustained yield and stable employment for industries, and provides thousands of acres of land for public recreation.

On Behalf of the **FOREST LAKE AREA SCHOOLS** Board of Directors:

Rob Rapheal, Board Chair

Passed on a vote of ___ ayes; ___ nays

Dated: _____