



Grand Council Treaty #3

Office of the Ogichidaa

P.O. BOX 1720
Kenora, Ontario P9N 3X7
Ph: 1-877-880-5638
Fax: 1-807-548-4776

MEDIA RELEASE

April 24, 2026

Grand Council Treaty #3 Raises Concern Over U.S. Mining Actions Threatening Shared Waters

Grand Council Treaty #3 is raising serious concern regarding recent actions by the United States government to advance mining development in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness watershed in northern Minnesota. These actions would allow sulfide-ore copper mining in a sensitive headwaters region that flows directly into the Rainy River system and into Treaty #3 territory.

The Boundary Waters watershed is a globally significant freshwater system that connects to Rainy Lake, Rainy River, Lake of the Woods, and the Winnipeg River. These waters are vital to the health, livelihoods, and cultural practices of Treaty #3 communities. For decades, mining activity in this region has been restricted due to the high risk of contamination associated with sulfide-ore deposits.

On April 16, the United States Senate voted to lift long-standing protections in the Boundary Waters region. Sulfide-ore mining carries a high risk of acid mine drainage, which can cause permanent and irreversible damage to water systems. Due to the interconnected nature of these waterways, any contamination has the potential to travel downstream into Treaty #3 territory, impacting drinking water, fisheries, ecosystems, and cultural practices, including the protection of manoomin.

Grand Council Treaty #3 acknowledges and stands in support of Gakjijwanong Anishinaabe Nation, which has formally condemned these actions. Chief Carrie Atatise-Norwegian stated:

“This decision threatens the lives of our people, water, resources and our ancestral lands. As stewards of our lands, Gakjijwanong Anishinaabe Nation will be asserting, exercising and protecting our rights, jurisdiction and sovereignty as a Nation.”

Tribal Nations in Minnesota, including the White Earth Reservation Business Committee and Red Lake Nation, have also expressed strong opposition, citing risks to water, manoomin, fisheries, and treaty-protected rights, along with concerns regarding the lack of meaningful consultation.

“This is not just a local issue, it is a transboundary concern that directly affects our waters, our environment, and our way of life,” said Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh. “We stand with our relatives across the border in protecting the waters that connect us. The health of these waters is critical to our people, now and for future generations.”

Grand Council Treaty #3 is calling for immediate engagement with Canadian federal agencies, including the International Joint Commission, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Canada Water Agency, to address the risks posed by these developments and to strengthen transboundary water protections.

Grand Council Treaty #3 will continue to work alongside First Nations and Tribal Nations to ensure a unified Anishinaabe voice in protecting shared waters. This includes leadership engagement, formal communications, and advancing Treaty #3-led approaches to watershed governance that uphold the protection of lands, waters, and resources.

The Grand Council Treaty #3 represents 28 First Nations across 55,000 square miles of the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 territory.

-30-

For more information please contact: Daniel Morriseau, Political Advisor, Grand Council Treaty #3 at 1-877-880-5638 ext. 203 or email Daniel.Morriseau@treaty3.ca

