



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Eastern Region
Regional Office

626 East Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 800
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414-297-3600

File Code: 2760

Date: SEP 06 2018

Mr. Mitchell Leverette
State Director
Eastern States State Office
20 M Street SE, Suite 950
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Leverette:

With this letter, the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service cancels the application for the Rainy River Watershed Withdrawal. This withdrawal was submitted to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on December 14, 2016. The withdrawal application proposed to withdraw 234,328 acres of National Forest System land on the Superior National Forest from the United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws for a 20-year period.

After a careful 15 month review, including extensive public input, the USDA Forest Service has enough information to determine a withdrawal is not needed. The laws that govern mineral development within the Rainy River watershed provide considerable discretion as to whether to allow new mineral leases that will be guided by the Superior National Forest's Land Management Plan. Future lease offerings can adequately be evaluated and regulated on a case-by-case basis without invocation of a 20-year withdrawal.

I appreciate the partnership and cooperation displayed by your staff at the BLM Eastern States State Office. If you have any questions regarding this decision, please contact Shawn Olson, Director of Air, Water, Lands, Soils, and Minerals, at (414) 297-3087 or saolson@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

KATHLEEN ATKINSON
Area Director, Northeastern Area and Regional Forester, Eastern Region

