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REPEAL THE IRON MINING LAW

2013 Act 1, written on behalf of Gogebic Taconite, enacted broad reductions to state mining laws to enable the largest open pit mine in Wisconsin history in the environmentally and culturally sensitive Bad River Watershed of Lake Superior. The proposed mine would have permanently affected groundwater, lakes, streams and wetlands and left behind hundreds of millions of tons of wastes containing asbestos and sulfides that can cause acid mine drainage that leaches toxic heavy metals. Gogebic Taconite halted the mine, stating the site was "not feasible" due to the large amount of wetlands that would be destroyed and required to be mitigated.

The Bad River Watershed includes 66 lakes, streams and rivers that are Exceptional and Outstanding Resource Waters. The mine site includes multiple designated trout streams, and the DNR has identified the Penokee Range as an area of high conservation importance. Downstream are the Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs, a National Natural Landmark and Wetland of International Importance comprising 40% of the coastal wetlands of Lake Superior.

The iron mining law also enacted sweeping limits on public's right to participate and challenge mining permitting activities and gave the company huge tax breaks. The law is unnecessary now that Gogebic Taconite is gone.

Be it RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress supports repeal of 2013 Act 1 because it unnecessarily reduced environmental protections and citizen input and is no longer necessary, and requests that the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board make a similar finding and work with the Legislature to repeal the law.

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