#060314

A RESOLUTION to repeal the Iron Mining Law

2013 Act 1, written on behalf of Gogebic Taconite, enacted broad changes 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 mine would be up to 1000 feet deep and larger than one square mile in area, permanently affecting groundwater, wetlands, lakes and streams, and producing more than 900 million tons of acid-leaching wastes.

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 new mining law has caused loss of cooperation between the Wisconsin DNR and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on environmental review, has severely damaged the relationship between the State and Wisconsin's Indian Tribes by impacting Treaty-protected resources without adequate consultation, and may result in further erosion of cooperation between State, Federal, and Tribal regulators.

Be it RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress supports repeal of 2013 Act 1 because it unnecessarily reduced environmental protections and citizen input related to iron mining, 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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