

46-05-2015

**RESOLUTION: Defend The Metallic Sulfide Mining Moratorium Law**

Metallic sulfide bearing ores are the primary cause of acid mine drainage (AMD). When ore bodies containing sulfide minerals are removed from the ground, and the solid rock is pulverized for processing, the huge quantity of crushed waste rock that is left behind easily reacts chemically with nothing more than the air and water that is in the environment to produce sulfuric acid. This chemical reaction is inevitable following industrial scale mining in sulfide bearing ores or host rock. And earthen dams that are supposed to "contain" such lakes of acid generating chemicals cannot and do not last forever. AMD dissolves toxic heavy metals such as mercury, lead, copper, arsenic, and has poisoned rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and groundwater in North America and throughout the world. And the pace of destruction is speeding up. The Metallic Sulfide Mining Moratorium Law requires a corporation proposing to mine in ground containing metallic sulfides in Wisconsin to provide a documented example of a metallic sulfide mine in North America that has been operated and closed without causing environmental harm before that proposed mine can be considered for a permit. The legislature - including then- Representative Scott Walker - overwhelmingly approved the law and Governor Thompson signed it in 1998. The mining industry has yet to provide any successful examples of safe mining in metallic sulfides almost 20 years later.

Mining in the Penokee Hills was subject to the Metallic Sulfide Mining Moratorium Law, due to the presence of significant amounts of sulfide bearing rock there. But the new iron mining law enacted in 2013, written by and for Gogebic Taconite Co. specifically exempted iron mining in the Penokee Hills from the Metallic Sulfide Mining Moratorium.

RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress supports preservation of the Metallic Sulfide Mining Moratorium Law and supports strengthening the law to include iron mining, and any other industrial mining in which sulfide ores are significantly present, because the mining industry has yet to prove that mining in metallic sulfides is safe and requests that the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board make a similar finding and work with the Legislature to support the law.

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