



NEWS RELEASE

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Sierra Club Calls for Repeal of GTac's Iron Mining Law

Madison: The Sierra Club today renewed its call on the Wisconsin Legislature to repeal 2013 Act 1, the comprehensive gutting of environmental protections written by Gogebic Taconite to enable its now-abandoned mine proposal. 2013 Act 1, the ferrous or iron mining law, should be repealed in its entirety since the company is not pursuing permits.

The iron mining law (state statutes Chapter 295, Subchapter III) is based entirely on the scientific falsehood that iron mining cannot cause acid mine drainage caused by the presence of sulfide minerals. Numerous independent geologic studies have proven that there are significant quantities of sulfide minerals in the Penokees at the proposed Gogebic Taconite (GTac) mine site. This fact proves that the reductions of environmental protections along with severe limits on the public's right to participate and challenge permits were unjustified.

"GTac has abandoned its proposal after demanding certainty in permitting that only this law could give it. That fact gives the legislature a rare opportunity to fix the huge mistake it made when it approved such damaging legislation based on false information. GTac lied to the public and the legislature to get its way and made a lot of promises it couldn't keep. Let's fix this law now before the next fly-by-night company shows up." said Dave Blouin, John Muir Chapter Mining Committee Chair

The ferrous mining law was overwhelmingly opposed at each public hearing in the legislature by thousands of state residents. More than 75 statewide, local and national conservation and environmental organizations including the **Sierra Club, Wisconsin Resources Protection Council, Trout Unlimited, the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, the Izaak Walton League of Wisconsin, the River Alliance of Wisconsin, the Penokee Hills Education Project, the Mining Impact Coalition of Wisconsin, Clean Wisconsin, the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters** and the **Natural Resources Defense Council** opposed the legislation. Polling showed that the law was opposed by a majority of state residents.

The ferrous mining law established broad and comprehensive reductions in environmental protections and citizen involvement to enable the proposal. Amongst the most egregious, is the fact that the law established that the destruction of wetlands through mining, and for dumping wastes into, was presumed necessary. The law also broadly reduced protections for lakes, streams, groundwater, and air. Repealing 2013 Act 1 would have no effect on regulation of future iron mining as it would reestablish protections and regulation of iron mining that were in the current metallic mining law. That law was crafted and intended to regulate iron mining when it was originally approved by the legislature.

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Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is made up of 15,000 members and supporters working to promote clean energy and protect water resources in Wisconsin.