

**An open to letter to the Wisconsin Legislature from state, regional, and national environmental and conservation organizations urging preservation of Wisconsin's Mining Moratorium law.**

April 13, 2017

Dear Wisconsin Legislator,

We are respectfully writing to you about the proposed repeal of Wisconsin's common sense Mining Moratorium Law. We, the undersigned, urge you to vote against any legislation to repeal this common sense, "Prove It First" law that helps protect Wisconsin's precious natural resources from unsafe metallic sulfide mining.

Metallic mining proposals, whether for iron, base or precious metals, are the largest and most complex and destructive land uses considered for the state. The impacts from mining and mine wastes require strict and careful monitoring and management to limit environmental damage and negative economic impacts to local communities and the state.

Wisconsin's Mining Moratorium Law should be retained. It was passed by overwhelming majorities in both the Assembly and Senate and signed into law by Governor Thompson. The law requires that the industry provide examples of metallic sulfide mines that have been operated and closed without polluting the environment. The industry could not document such an example prior to the passage of the bill in 1998 and they have not been able to do so since. Wisconsin citizens should not be the test subjects for unproven mining technologies.

The fact that the law is a moratorium in name only is well understood by regulators and the public. It is simply a permit condition that must be met before final permits are granted. Note that the law is already a compromise due to the DNR's determination that two different mines could meet each 10-year requirement for operations and closure without causing pollution.

Recent claims that the Flambeau mine in Ladysmith is proof of a metallic sulfide mine that has not caused pollution are false. U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb ruled that the Flambeau Mining Company violated the Clean Water Act on numerous counts. We invite you to review the attached briefing paper with important background about the law and pollution at the Ladysmith mine for your consideration.

Recent research is revealing new details about water contamination from the Flambeau mine. Robert E. Moran, Ph.D. - a Geochemist and Hydrogeologist with 45 years of domestic and international experience with mining and water quality issues in both the public and private sectors - has reviewed the development of the mine including permitting efforts, the short operating period and years of monitoring. A summary of Dr. Moran's research about ongoing and long-term contamination at the Flambeau mine site can be found at: [www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/issues/mining](http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/issues/mining)

There is nothing in the law to stop a company from applying for permits today unless the industry is unable or unwilling to demonstrate an example mine. In fact, a recent survey of metallic sulfide regulation in the Great Lakes region by the National Wildlife Federation described Wisconsin's Mining Moratorium as an exemplary law.

We, the undersigned representatives for our organizations, respectfully call upon you to preserve and protect the Mining Moratorium Law to guard our natural resources and our right to live in a clean, healthy environment.

With our sincere appreciation,

**Alliance for the Great Lakes  
Todd Brennan, Watershed Project  
Manager  
Chicago, IL**

**Anishinaabe Nijiji/Protect The Earth  
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**Center for Biological Diversity  
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**Citizens For Safe Water Around Badger  
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**Clean Water Action Network of  
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**Freshwater Future**  
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**Headwaters Group of Northern Thunder**  
**Tom Wilson, Mining Sub-Committee Chair**  
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**Sierra Club - Chippewa Valley Group  
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**Sierra Club- Coulee Region Group  
Patrick Wilson, Chair  
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**Sierra Club - Four Lakes Group  
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**Sierra Club-Fox Valley Group  
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**Sierra Club-Great Waters Group  
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**Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter  
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**Sierra Club-North Star (Minnesota)  
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**Sierra Club-Southeast Gateway Group  
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**Sierra Student Coalition - UW Madison  
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**Trout Unlimited-Wisconsin State  
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**Wisconsin Environment  
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**Wisconsin League of Conservation  
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**Wisconsin Network for Peace and  
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**Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve  
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