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RESOLUTION: REPEAL THE IRON MINING LAW 2013 Act 1

ACT 1, written by and for Gogebic Taconite, Inc., enacted sweeping changes to state mining laws to enable what was planned to be the largest open pit iron mine in the world in the environmentally and culturally sensitive Bad River Watershed of Lake Superior. The proposed mine would have permanently damaged or destroyed wetlands, groundwater, lakes, and streams, and left behind a moonscape and hundreds of millions of tons of wastes containing asbestos and acid generating sulfides and 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 under the outrageously generous terms of Act 1. Get that – "mitigated" – not saved or protected.

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 Penoque 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 remaining coastal wetlands of Lake Superior. The iron mining law also placed severe limits on the right of the public to participate and challenge mining permitting activities and it gave the out-of state company huge special subsidies and privileges that were unprecedented. Now that Gogebic Taconite has left Wisconsin, this is the right time to carefully and soberly re-evaluate the excessively permissive provisions of that hastily enacted law.

Be it RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress supports repeal of 2013 Act 1 because it unwisely and severely reduces or simply eliminates critical air, land and water protections for this exceptional natural resource, as well as opportunities for citizen input and oversight at public hearings. The Conservation Congress requests that the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board make a similar finding and work with the Legislature to tear down this law.

NAME OF AUTHOR: Claire M. Vanderslice

ADDRESS: 2276 Hwy I

CITY, STATE, ZIP: Grafton, WI 53024

COUNTY INTRODUCED IN: Ozaukee

SIGNATURE: Claire Vanderslice
e-claire@earthlink.net

Phone: 262-375-2230