

RESOLUTION NO. 54

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING LEGISLATION RELAXING PROTECTIONS FORMERLY IMPOSED IN REGARD TO SULFIDE MINING IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN.

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly will be considering legislation that has the potential to adversely affect protections related sulfide mining; and,

WHEREAS, the current law prohibits the DNR from issuing permits until certain standards related to surface and groundwater are met, one of which is the proof that there is currently a mine in operation for a minimum of ten years and has been a mine closed for a minimum of ten years in the United States or Canada not resulting in the pollution of ground or surface water from acid drainage and the proposed legislation removes those standards; and,

WHEREAS, there are concerns related on changing groundwater standards for nonferrous metallic mining and prospecting sites should the proposed legislation be approved; and,

WHEREAS, currently 'bulk sampling', the removal of the maximum of 10,000 tons of material to access deposits and analyze data requires a reclamation bond and a minimum of \$50,000.00 insurance which under the proposed legislation would not only have the bond and insurance requirements removed, but would also eliminate several other criteria including no requirement of monitoring or reclamation of the 'bulk sampling' site as currently required; and,

WHEREAS, currently Financial Assurance is required prior to commencement of any mining placing any financial burden on the mining entity, and with the passage of the proposed legislation resulting in posting assurance after the mining is complete the potential risk to taxpayers in the event that a mining company or subsidiary may file bankruptcy prior to pollution cleanup or reclamation of a site would be greatly enhanced; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation would also alter the DNR hearing process currently followed, which would result in the discontinuance of public input and the opportunity to contest a proposed application; and,


WHEREAS, Taylor County is a sparsely populated region largely dominated by and economically dependent on forest lands, agricultural lands and recreational lands with minimal infrastructure and few industrial plants. Clean air and clean water are necessary to maintain a healthy environment and support public health, safety and wellbeing within the county.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Taylor County Board of Supervisors, duly assembled on this 25th day of October, 2017, does go on record opposing Senate Bill 395 and Assembly Bill 499 that roll back protection of both ground and surface water from sulfide pollution, set lower standards for Financial Assurance and alter other current permitting and mining requirements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Taylor County Board of Supervisors encourage the legislature to abide by the bipartisan mining standard signed by then-Governor Tommy Thompson in 1998.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be submitted to the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry, Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Labor, Senator Jerry Petrowski and Representative James Edming.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:


Raymond Soper, District 16 Supervisor
Taylor County Board of Supervisors