



To: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature
Date: August 21, 2017
RE: Support LRB 2652/1 – Mining for America Act

Dear legislators,

The Natural Resource Development Association asks for your support of the Mining for America Act, LRB 2652/1. We support policies, including this proposal that lead to proper, necessary, and conscientious resource development and conservation. The legislation before you is a clear example of how we can have both a growing economy and clean environment – as hard-working families across Wisconsin already know – by creating a new generation of mining jobs in our state.

This legislation, proposed by State Sen. Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst) and State Rep. Rob Hutton (R-Brookfield), would provide for responsible development of Wisconsin's resources by lifting the moratorium on nonferrous metallic mining in Wisconsin and providing a clear timeline for the permitting process, while maintaining strong environmental protections.

The legislation would do four key things:

- 1) Lift the mining moratorium that has effectively halted new nonferrous metallic mining in Wisconsin.
- 2) Place mining under a permit process similar to other environmental permits and establish timelines so that mining applicants aren't left in limbo indefinitely.
- 3) Make minor modifications for demonstrating compliance with certain standards.
- 4) Clarify fee schedules for mining applicants.

As a result of these changes, this legislation can create a new generation of mining jobs that will help employ thousands of people across Wisconsin through not only mining, but other industries that contribute to mining operations, like construction. A single typical mine in Wisconsin would create 300 permanent jobs with an average compensation package of between \$81,000 to \$88,000 a year, which is similar to workers in neighboring states. These are economic figures that should not be ignored, especially because of their positive impacts to economically distressed areas of this state. Wisconsin has untapped reserves of these valuable resources that could put hundreds of people to work for years to come, but we have maintained a moratorium blocking responsible economic development of our resources. So, while neighboring states like Michigan and Minnesota allow mining of iron as well as other metallic minerals, including gold and silver, Wisconsin has sat on the sidelines of this economic boon.

Wisconsin has made great strides in moving our state forward, but this legislation will update our laws to help create clean and safe economic development of our state's natural resources. Over the last several years, we know members of the Wisconsin State Legislature have been diligent about reviewing outdated rules and regulations. LRB 2652 would revise Wisconsin's metallic mining laws, which have not

changed much in the 40 years since they were enacted in 1978. In the Badger State, we can responsibly update our laws to keep in mind the technological advancements that have made mining cleaner, safer, and more efficient.

This legislation removes the mining moratorium on nonferrous metallic mining, but it does not preempt local regulations or seek exemptions from environmental standards currently in the statutes. Instead, the focus of the bill is to establish a clear timeline and consistency for regulatory approval. However, the process would still take a minimum of three to five years that will provide several opportunities for Department of Natural Resources (DNR) comments and requests for additional information during this regulatory process. A public informational hearing will be held on the draft prospecting or mining permit, the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and all other approvals that are related to the prospecting or mining project. DNR will continue to solicit and consider public comments maintaining opportunities for public input on these types of permits. Financial assurances would still remain in place to ensure an operator meets the long-term care requirements to cover the cost of the reclamation plan of a mining or prospecting site. These regulatory changes bring mining or prospecting permits more in line with how environmental permits are issued in the Badger State, and this will also make our state more competitive with the regulatory process in other states.

The Natural Resource Development Association encourages Wisconsin legislators to support and co-sponsor this legislation that will help create a new generation of mining jobs through developing our resources in a safe and clean way. By updating our metallic mining laws that have seen minimal updates over the last 40 years, the Badger State could further grow an industry that was once a major employer in our state. Through this legislation, we can help advance our state's economy through these types of family-supporting jobs, while maintaining strong environmental protections. Please consider co-sponsoring the Mining for America Act. **The deadline for co-sponsorship is 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 24th, 2017.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Conrad', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nathan Conrad
Executive Director
Natural Resource Development Association

About Natural Resource Development Association

The Natural Resource Development Association supports policies that lead to proper, necessary, and conscientious resource development and conservation. By engaging community leaders, laborers, manufacturers, and job creators in the legislative and decision-making process, the association will help create open atmosphere for resources development that is both environmentally sound and economically beneficial for Wisconsin.