

Dear Editor,

As a lifelong Wisconsin resident, like you I have seen good economic times and difficult times. One thing is always true, we all want to see the economy grow with more better paying jobs.

From 1991 to 2011, I was fortunate to be a member of the Wisconsin State Senate, representing north central Wisconsin. I saw my fair share of debates regarding metallic mining. In Madison, our elected officials are debating Senate Bill 395, the Mining in America Act, that would create job opportunities for workers and their families.

Senate Bill 395 will remove the burdensome mining moratorium in Wisconsin, paving the way for sound environmental and economic policies. With the passage of Senate Bill 395, we will see an influx of good, local, high paying jobs in some of the hardest hit parts of Wisconsin.

The passage of this bill will also mean jobs else where in Wisconsin. Every crane, back hoe, end loader, truck, right down to the shovels and hammers is a manufacturing job in other parts of the state.

On several occasions I was recognized by environmental groups on initiatives that protected our environment and by business and labor groups for my work on economic issues. Over the last twenty years other industries, including the mining of copper, zinc, gold and silver, have made technological advancements. Our environment and economy ought not be at odds, both can thrive without picking one over the other. A prime example of this is the Wisconsin River, at one time it was polluted, but because of sound public policies, the river is now cleaner and industry continues to operate along its shore.

A typical mine can create nearly 300 full time jobs that have an average compensation package of \$81,000 to \$88,000 a year. That is a path way to middle and upper middle incomes. The people of Northern Wisconsin deserve this chance. Senate Bill 395 can make this a possibility.

Russ Decker

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