



101 W. Main Street #204, PO Box 875, Ashland, WI 54806

January 26, 2013

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
P.O. Box 371
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Dear Editor,

The topic of new mining legislation in Wisconsin has been hotly contested over the past two years. The issue brings with it much emotion because it often continues to be framed, by the media and by some advocates on both sides, as a confrontation of pro-mine versus anti-mine interests. In fact, the primary issue presently up for debate is whether current environmental standards should be weakened.

This polarization is both unfortunate and incorrect. While there are certainly some who would support mining at nearly any environmental cost, and some who would oppose mining under any circumstances, these voices do not represent the majority of citizens of northern Wisconsin. Most residents fall somewhere in the middle. Many support mining as a welcome source of good paying jobs. But this is based on the assumption that our legislators will not allow pollution of our water and degradation of the environment so essential to the quality of the north woods lifestyle and the tourism industry.

The Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA) mission is to promote a healthy relationship between the people and natural communities of the Bad River watershed by involving all citizens in assessing, maintaining and improving watershed integrity for future generations.

We are not a tribal entity. BRWA is a community organization working with volunteers, towns, and counties to monitor water quality, improve stream crossings and riverbanks, protect fish habitat, and slow erosion. We are committed to gathering sound scientific data to help make good decisions for the long-term health of our community.

We are industry-neutral. We support sound environmental practices regardless of commercial activity including manufacturing, tourism, agriculture, timber or mining. We oppose practices that degrade water quality within the watershed and seek to assist in planning and providing for sound environmental practices that retain economic viability.

It is for these reasons that we oppose the provisions of AB1/SB1 that weaken current environmental standards and provide for exemptions to ferrous mining.

Regardless of legislation that may be passed, any potential open-pit mine in Ashland and Iron counties is likely years away. Let us keep this discussion focused on the fact that

most citizens of the northwoods support both job creation and the prospect of a clean healthy environment. While we will certainly differ on our opinions and perspectives, let us conduct ourselves with mutual respect and dignity, not allowing the issue to be framed by those with biased self-interests who would benefit from creating division within our community.

Sincerely,
The Bad River Watershed Association
Board of Directors
P.O. Box 875
Ashland, WI 54806
info@badriverwatershed.org