



The

# VOTER

The Mayans got it Wrong - Membership gathering



Photo Amy Golackson

Nineteen members and one returning member gathered at the Speakeasy on January 29th. President Amy Golackson spoke about all of the things that the state League is doing.



League of Women Voters - Janesville

[www.lwvjvl.org](http://www.lwvjvl.org)

February 2013



## *Wisconsin's Proposed Mining Law*

Hundreds of people from across the state came to the Capitol yesterday to have a say in the mining debate. The League of Women Voters submitted [the statement below](#) in opposition to the proposed mining legislation. [An interesting account \(next page\)](#) of the abrupt ending of the 12-hour hearing. See Clean Wisconsin's [mining fact sheet](#) for details about Assembly Bill 1/Senate Bill 1.

Senators Cullen and Schultz have introduced an alternative mining bill, based on more than 20 hours of testimony taken last fall from mining experts, state and federal regulators, and environmental advocates. Senator Cullen has announced he intends to hold a listening session soon in Ashland County, near the site of the proposed mine. The League has not taken a position on the alternative proposal.

The bipartisan Wisconsin Transportation Finance and Policy Commission this week released its final report: **Keep Wisconsin Moving: Smart Investments, Measurable Results**. According to the [Wisconsin Budget Project blog](#), revenue for the state Transportation Fund would be boosted by about \$6.8 billion over the next ten years if lawmakers would enact the recommendations in the report. The Commission recommends using the additional revenue to increase spending by about \$479 million per year, including \$36.3 million for public transit. The League will support the allocation for public transit and other parts of the report, with details forthcoming.

## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION NETWORK**

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January 23, 2013

To: Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Forestry, Mining, and Revenue Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economy and Mining

Re: Opposition to AB 1/SB 1, the mining bill

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin was shocked to learn that there will be only one hearing—in Madison—on AB 1/SB 1, the mining bill. Not holding a hearing in the area of the state that is most affected by the legislation is a breach of public process. This utter disrespect for public input is reflected in the legislation itself, which weakens environmental protections while reducing opportunities for citizen comment or legal redress.

Current mining law recognizes that mining inevitably leads to pollution and destruction of natural areas, yet offers reasonable environmental protection if the Department of Natural Resources has the time, resources and information needed to make a vigilant assessment.

It is bad government to tie the hands of the experts at the DNR, who use reason and science to balance the public interest in a safe and healthy environment with the public interest in developing resources.

This bill takes away the agency's ability to get the information it needs for rational decision-making.

On the contrary, the legislation explicitly states that whatever information the mining company provides in its application is de facto sufficient. Then it goes on to require the agency to allow destruction of wetlands, groundwater and surface water for the iron mining industry.

The mining bill guts sound government, which is based on checks and balances, along with facts and reason. It constitutes a give-away of our natural heritage and our civic legacy.

We did not support this approach to a mining bill last year, and we still do not support such an approach.

We oppose AB 1/SB 1 and urge you to do the same.

Thank you.

# Wisconsin Citizens Media Cooperative Authentic News, Locally Grown

## The Million Dollar Bill

January 24, 2013  
by Rebecca Kemble



Sen. Tom Tiffany and Sen. Glenn Grothman, recipients of large campaign donations from mining deregulation advocates.

Shortly after 9pm last night, Sen. Tom Tiffany (R-Hazlet) abruptly adjourned the one and only public hearing on a controversial mining deregulation bill after being called out as the second largest recipient of campaign donations by groups that lobbied for a similar bill

last session.

Sen. Tom Tiffany and Sen. Glenn Grothman, recipients of large campaign donations from mining deregulation advocates.

Of the nearly \$1 million in campaign donations to 20 Senate and Assembly mining committee members by interests backing mining deregulation, \$74,000 went to Sen. Tiffany, according to Victoria McMurray who cited Wisconsin Democracy Campaign finance records. Sen. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) was the biggest recipient, cashing in nearly half a million in campaign contributions, while Sen. Glenn Grothman (R-West Bend) came in third with \$52,000 in donations.

Tiffany interrupted McMurray's testimony, telling her to, "write a letter to the editor" before calling the last person to testify, who had already been informed she was next. (Click here for the video.) As soon as Celeste Lorigan finished speaking, Tiffany brought the gavel down on the hearing declaring it adjourned, despite a prior agreement with Rep. Fred Clark (D-Baraboo) to allow the minority party a closing statement before adjournment.

Both Tiffany and co-chair Rep. Mary Williams

(R-Medford) were escorted out the the hearing room by State Troopers and Capitol Police officers.

The hearing ended much as it began twelve hours earlier: In chaos with a highly visible police presence and the co-chairs struggling to maintain a tight grip on the proceedings. Williams spent nearly five minutes at the beginning of the hearing reciting a litany of rules, restrictions and prohibited behavior that included interpretive dance, singing, pictures and props.

The corporate influence and biased nature of the proceedings were evident throughout the day. According to Williams' rules, the bill's sponsors would be given 10 minutes to speak, and the Department of Natural Resources would be given 5. Everybody else was supposed to restrict their remarks to 2 minutes, with time allowed for committee members to ask a maximum of two questions.

But it was no surprise when the CEO, Chief Engineer and lobbyist for Gogebic Taconite – the company that is proposing to blast a 1,000 foot deep open pit mine 21 miles long and half a mile across at the headwaters of the Bad River near the shores of Lake Superior – took up nearly an hour of the committee's time. GTac was also allowed to show pictures and graphs – something others were prohibited from doing.

Several hundreds of people had traveled to Madison – many from the extreme northwest part of the state – in order to have their say on the bill, but fewer than 60 got the chance. Advocates for the bill were given pride of place at the beginning of the day. For the final three hours only those opposed to the legislation remained, and there were hundreds still in the queue.

Even though this was the only hearing on the bill, two organizations that are major stakeholders in mining permitting processes in Wisconsin were not formally invited to testify. They had to sign up and wait for their two minutes just like everybody else.

When her turn came, Rebecca Grasser of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said, "I don't know if there was some mix up, but we weren't invited to testify." The Army Corps has a large amount of authority in Wisconsin regarding the regulation of discharges into wetlands and navigable waters that are considered "waters of the United States." They are on record as saying that the scope of deregulation in this bill would likely require the Army Corps to require a parallel permitting process for a mining company, instead of a collaborative one with the Wisconsin DNR.

Also not invited was the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, the member organization of the 11 Ojibwe tribes that have natural resource management rights based on treaties that govern the entire northern third of the state. By executive order, Wisconsin state agencies are required to consult with tribes on any matters that would affect their rights in ceded territories. But there has been no consultation with them regarding the bill, even though the proposed

mine would be located in ceded territory and near the border of the Bad River reservation.

The Koch Brothers-funded Americans for Prosperity, whose Wisconsin state director is an ex-Chief of Staff for one of the bill's co-sponsors, Rep. Scott Suder (R-Abbotsford), organized buses to bring mining supporters in from Milwaukee and the Fox Cities area. Many of them filled out slips registering for the bill, but only a few testified.

Other Republican political operatives masquerading as ordinary citizens were also given privileged spots in the testifying lineup. Most notable was Shirl LaBarre, who said, "I'm just here as a wife and a mom and a third generation plumbing family." What she neglected to mention was that the owner of GTac, coal billionaire Chris Cline, organized \$7,000 in contributions for her failed 2010 campaign for Assembly. She also did not disclose her leadership role in a failed attempt to

recall Sen. Bob Jauch (D-Poplar) who has opposed mining deregulation.

Rep. Mark Honadel (R-Oak Creek), one of the three co-sponsors of the bill also received direct campaign donations from Cline and his associates in 2010.

Other testifiers in favor of the bill were lobbyists for the Operating Engineers Union, United Sportsmen of Wisconsin, and the National Rifle Association whose lobbyist said that GTac had approached the NRA two years ago with plans to turn the reclaimed mine site into a long-range shooting facility.

At the conclusion of the hearing, Rep. Clark requested Sen. Tiffany to reconvene so that he could make a statement on behalf of the minority party, as previously agreed to. When Tiffany refused, Clark was reduced to shouting above the din: "Clearly, this hearing was insufficient. Please consider scheduling another hearing in northern Wisconsin."

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League of Women Voters of Wisconsin

**Making Democracy Work**



## *Wisconsin's Legislature leadership*

New lawmakers were sworn in earlier this week with a lot of talk of bipartisanship. We'll see how that translates into action.

**Mining.** One thing that does not bode well is that Senators Tim Cullen (D-Janesville) and Dale Schultz (R-Richland Center) have not been assigned by their party leaderships to the mining committee. The two senators led a Select Committee in 2012 to study the issues and devise mining legislation that "provides the certainty the industry asked for while also protecting our environment, especially our water," according to Sen. Cullen, quoted in *The Capital Times*.

The League of Women Voters believes mining policy should not weaken environmental protection, and it must provide ample opportunities for citizen input and, when needed, legal remedy.

**State budget.** Citizen Action's Robert Kraig says that of all the budget decisions Governor Walker is likely to make this year, "none will have a bigger impact than whether Wisconsin accepts over \$12 billion in federal health care reform money over the next decade to fill the holes in BadgerCare." Read Kraig's column in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

Last fall John Keckhaver, who leads a public policy consulting firm in Madison, spoke to the League's legislative committee about how to follow the state budget. He noted the budget is a "nearly continuous process." Last year the Governor sent instructions to state agencies, and the agencies submitted their requests. In February the Governor will release the executive budget, which will be introduced as legislation. It will have analysis and hearings before having a vote in each house. Here are ways to follow the budget process:

Visit the Legislative Fiscal Bureau website for official documents and nonpartisan summaries

Subscribe to Keckhaver's budget alerts on his website

Subscribe to the Wisconsin Budget Project blog

Call your legislator's office with specific questions.

Find the League on Facebook!

Follow LWV Wisconsin on Twitter @LWV\_WI

Your contribution to the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network will help make democracy work in Wisconsin! Make a secure online donation or download a printable contribution form here.

# AB 1/SB 1: Iron Mining Bill

This mining bill jeopardizes the health of our families and our environment to support the interests of wealthy, out-of-state mining executives.

**Here are some of the most egregious provisions in the bill.**

## Silences the voice of the public

- Removes citizens' right to sue for illegal environmental damage by a mine. (p. 39\*)
- Removes meaningful contested case hearings, which happen before a permit is issued and give the public its only opportunity to impact the mining permit, challenge junk science and question mining officials on the record. (p. 10)
- Only two required public hearings for the entire mining project; current law requires a minimum of three. (p. 10)
- Caps the amount a mining corporation must pay to the state for analyzing its permit, leaving the public to pay the remainder of the bill. (p. 17)
- Directs 40% of all mining tax revenues to the beleaguered Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, rather than to local governments for their investments in local infrastructure as local law requires. WEDC has recently been under fire for losing track of more than \$8 million in loans it gave to state businesses. (p. 40)
- Allows mining corporations to seek an end to their long-term responsibility for the mining site within 20 years rather than 40 years as required by current law. (p. 37)

## Rolls back commonsense environmental protections

- Allows the filling of lake beds. (p. 28)
- Allows mining corporations to dump mine waste into sensitive wetlands and floodplains. (pp. 22-28)
- Doubles the distance around a mining site that can be polluted. (p. 32)
- Allows mining corporations to draw down water levels from rivers, lakes, streams and groundwater. (pp. 29-30)
- Allows iron mining law to supersede all other environmental regulations, unlike current law which gives deference to existing environmental laws, and unlike laws all other industry is subject to. (p. 38)
- Allows DNR to provide an exemption for a mining corporation from any part of the provisions of the mining bill. (p. 15-16)

This bill includes a legislative finding for wetlands that states it is “probable that mining these deposits will result in adverse impacts” to our natural resources, and those impacts are “presumed to be necessary.”

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join us:  
\*Refers to Wisconsin Legislative Council's Jan. 14, 2013 memo on the draft bill, available online at [www.cleanwisconsin.org/mining](http://www.cleanwisconsin.org/mining)



If the DNR (480 days) and federal government (2-4 years) are operating under two different timelines for permit review as this bill outlines, it basically relinquishes the state's review role in protecting our own resources and assures delays, higher costs and greater uncertainty.



\* Refers to Wisconsin Legislative Council's January 14, 2013 memo on the draft bill, available online at [www.cleanwisconsin.org/mining](http://www.cleanwisconsin.org/mining)

## Eliminates accountability and scientific decisions for permitting a mine

- Removes DNR authority to issue a stop work order if the mining operation is an “immediate and substantial threat to public health and safety or the environment” (p. 39)
- Instead of requiring mines to comply with all rules on air, groundwater, surface water, and solid and hazardous waste management; the bill merely requires the company to be “committed” to complying with those laws. (p. 14)
- Changes the standard for protecting public health, safety and welfare from the protective “will not” cause harm to the subjective “is not likely” to cause harm. (p. 14)

## Potential for acid mine drainage

Acid mine drainage occurs when sulfur-containing ore or waste rock is exposed to the environment. The sulfur in this rock reacts with water and oxygen to create sulfuric acid. This acidifies surrounding waters and soils, killing wildlife and damaging ecosystems. The acid can also cause toxic metals such as arsenic or cadmium to leach from mine wastes, contaminating lakes, rivers and groundwater. This bill alters several provisions meant to protect our waterways from this acid mine drainage.

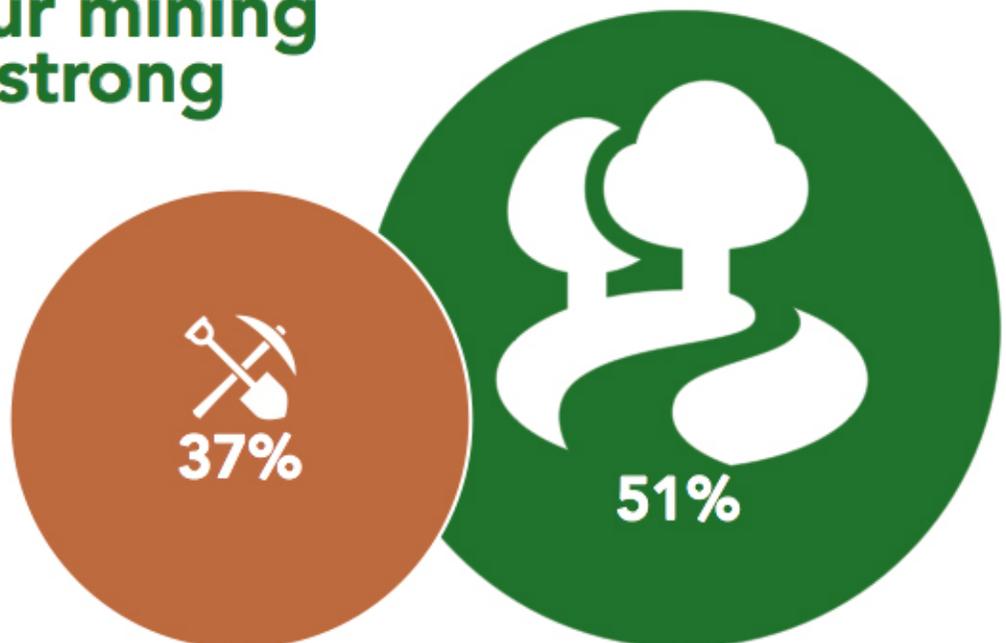
•The DNR and the US Geological Survey agree there is sulfide-containing rock in the area of Northern Wisconsin's iron deposit in the Penokee Range, and we only have to look as far as northern Minnesota and the Dunka taconite mine for an example of such waste rock leading to acid mine drainage.

•The bill amends the current sulfide mining moratorium, so that it does not apply to iron mining even if sulfide-containing materials are found. (p. 19)

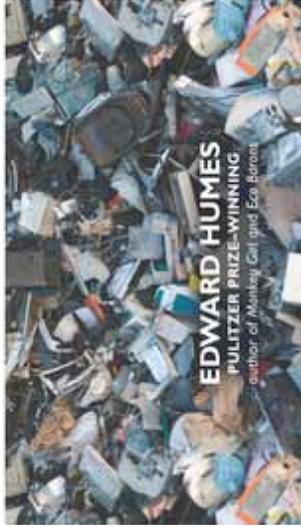


With the Penokees iron ore deposit lying 900 feet below ground, an iron mine will produce massive amounts of waste. This bill allows that waste to be placed directly into waterways and relaxes the information a company must give to DNR for their mining plans.

## What the public thinks: **Keep our mining laws strong**



From an October 2011 poll  
by Wisconsin Policy  
Research Institute, a  
conservative organization



# League of Women Voters

## **GARBOLGY** Our Dirty Love Affair with Trash

by **Edward Humes**

This book was chosen for study by the Climate Change Committee of the Janesville League of Women Voters. The community of Janesville is invited to read and discuss this book with us.



**Hedberg Public Library**  
(Ground Floor Meeting Room)  
316 S. Main Street  
Janesville, WI 53545

**Saturday**  
**February 23, 2013**  
**10:00 a.m. to 12 noon**  
**Discussion Leader**  
Neil Deupree

Call for more information  
Neil – 752-8342 or  
Barb – 752-7982

## Susan B. Anthony was a woman of passion and determination!

We gather each year for her birthday to celebrate her efforts to gain the right to vote for women which she sought with such an eloquent sense of justice!



Keynote Speaker: We will be hearing an entertaining program from Beloit College professor

Tom McBride. He will share "The Today's Women's Mindset List."

Have you ever wondered what Susan B.'s mindset was? You



don't want to miss this program!

Reserve your seat today!

Date: Sunday 02/10/2013

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Place: La Casa Grande

618 4th St, Beloit WI

RSVP

Current League members: \$32

Non League members: \$38

Check Payable to : League of Women Voters-Janesville

Mail to: Susan Adams

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Beloit, WI 53511



### Web addresses of National, State and Local

**Leagues:** To check out the action go to: LWV-US <[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)>

LWV-WI <[www.lwvwi.org](http://www.lwvwi.org)> JANESVILLE

LEAGUE <[www.lwvjvl.org](http://www.lwvjvl.org)>

## Celebrate your Birthday with the League!

*Remember you may still  
contribute to the State League  
with a birthday donation and half  
of your donation will be returned  
to our Janesville League.*

