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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

May 20, 2019

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEES:
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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE
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HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
AVIATION
COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Preston Cole
Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster Street
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Secretary Cole,

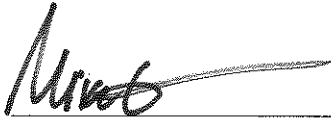
We wish to express our continued concerns regarding the proposed Back Forty Mine. Our meeting with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff provided useful information on the status of the permits, and we thank you for affording us the opportunity to meet. We were encouraged to learn of WDNR's ongoing conversations with Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and respectfully request these discussions continue throughout the duration of the permitting process.

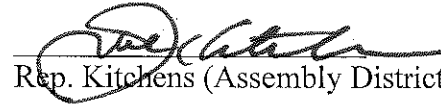
Wisconsin's water resources, from Lake Michigan to our rivers and streams, support the health of our communities, economies, and livelihoods. The location of the Back Forty Mine's sulfide open pit, only 50 yards from the banks of the Menominee River, is of great concern to us. This river, which serves as the boundary between Northeast Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula, flows south through Marinette, WI, to the bay of Green Bay and into Lake Michigan. Along the way it serves as a drinking water source for many, including the residents of Marinette. As you know, mining is a hazardous operation that comes with threats of leaks, spills, and overflows. While the mining company, Aquila Resources, has proposed fixtures to reduce the possibility of accidents, grave risks to the Menomonee River remain.

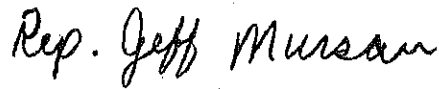
We urge you, as the state's top defender of our fresh water and natural resources, to prioritize reviewing the mine's permits. We ask that you lead in communicating concerns about the mine's threat to our waters and stand strong in defending those waters. Finally, we ask you to keep us apprised of new developments and changes impacting the mine or its permits.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our requests. We appreciate your efforts to ensure Wisconsin residents and industries have access to clean, safe water through your "Year of Clean Water" campaign. We look forward to working with you to protect our most precious natural resource.

Sincerely,


Rep. Gallagher (WI-08)


Rep. Kitchens (Assembly District 1)


Rep. Mursau (Assembly District 36)

Cc: Governor Tony Evers