

OPPOSE

NRCM Opposes: An Act to Prohibit the Mining of Massive Sulfide Ore Deposits under the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act

Oppose LD 160: *An Act to Prohibit the Mining of Massive Sulfide Ore Deposits under the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act*

Sponsored by:

Rep. Duchesne of Hudson

Co-Sponsored by:

Sen. Saviello of Franklin

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Summary:

LD 160 would “ban” mines in deposits with one million tons or more of “metallic minerals.” However, the bill does not define the term “metallic minerals.” The effect of this bill is entirely unclear.

Explanation:

If the term “metallic minerals” in LD 160 means target metals, then there is likely no metal deposit in Maine large enough to come under this ban. Target metals are typically about one percent of an orebody. So, for example, Bald Mountain’s orebody is about 35 million tons. If one percent of that is target metals, if that is what “metallic minerals” means, then Bald Mountain would have about 350,000 tons of “metallic minerals” and would not come under this proposed ban. Even if “metallic minerals” means ore, the relevance of a one million ton cut-off is questionable. A one-million ton orebody would result in a small mine, but it is still a large amount of material. For comparison purposes, the entire state of Maine generated about 1.7 million tons of solid waste in 2011. If the ore is reactive or near a sensitive resource, it could cause a lot of damage. So, the one million ton cut-off is arbitrary, whatever the term “metallic minerals” means.

Metal mining is one of the most dangerous industrial activities on earth. Maine people depend on clean water to support critical economic engines for our state: tourism, fishing, hunting, guiding, paddling, and many other activities. Wildlife watching, hunting, and fishing combined are worth about \$1.4 billion annually. Fishing alone is worth \$370 million per year. Maine lakes support about 52,000 jobs with an economic impact of \$3.5 billion annually. Weak mining laws and rules are a serious threat to our clean water and sustainable, job-creating industries that depend on a clean environment.

Maine needs strict and clear protections to prevent disastrous mining pollution. LD 160 is neither clear nor strict.

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