



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Ralph Chapman

455 Varnumville Road
Brooksville, ME 04617
Residence: (207) 326-0899
E-Mail: rchapmanHD37@gmail.com

March 30, 2012

Testimony in opposition to

LD 1853 An Act To Improve Environmental Oversight and Streamline Permitting for Mining in Maine

Senator Saviello, Representative Hamper, and other members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Ralph Chapman from Brooksville, the State Representative for House District 37 which includes six towns in coastal Hancock County: Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Penobscot, Sedgwick and Surry.

My district includes the location of the Kerramerican Mine in Blue Hill and the Callahan Mine in Brooksville. I briefly describe a few details of each.

The Kerramerican Mine (previously the Black Hawk Mine and the Douglass Mine) operated for five years (1972-1977) extracting one million tons of ore containing copper, zinc, lead, and silver from a series of underground mine shafts. A few years later, glacial till and topsoil were graded over the sulphide tailings and reseeded. In the mid 1990s investigations showed erosion of the tailings cover and an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 pounds per year of dissolved zinc from waste rock were being released to surface waters. In 2007 and 2008, further work with an estimated \$10 million cost was performed to install a geosynthetic cover system and initiate a five year monitoring program that is currently underway.

In 1964, with great fanfare, the Black Hawk mining operation was estimated to be able to run for ten to twenty years, employ 200 to 300 workers, and produce many millions of tons of ore. After exploratory work was completed, the estimate was 4.5 million tons. As I mentioned before, the mine produced only one million tons using 100 employees for five years.

The Callahan Mine is an EPA superfund cleanup site in which the first phase of work is largely completed and the second larger phase is beginning. Mining at this open-pit copper/zinc mine was begun in 1968 and was finished at the end of 1972. The pit is 600 to 1000 feet in diameter and 320 feet deep. Five million tons of non-ore-bearing waste rock and 800,000 tons of ore were removed. The clean-up cost is estimated to be \$23 million. Two hundred truck loads of contaminated material has been shipped out of state and two hundred truck loads of material is being brought to the site for remediation purposes.

[OVER]

I am told that the mining operations in my district that I have just described, would not be allowed under today's regulations. Certainly times have changed in the past thirty five to forty years. I doubt that the mine operators intended to contaminate the groundwater, contaminate the surface waters, or render the areas unacceptable for recreation or residential use. As far as I can tell from my research, both operations were fully licensed and permitted and conducted under the regulatory structure of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. And yet, both left not only the scars of resource extraction upon the land, but have left environmental disasters with continuing heavy metal contamination of surface waters, groundwaters, and local biota.

My point is this: Forty years from now, how will the situation be any different? Why do we think that the rules we put in place today will be adequate for the needs of society forty years from now? Our rules from the 1970s, thought to be adequate then, have not served us so well. Therefore, the task of designing rules now that really will be adequate for the future will take more expertise and time than this committee has available in these few weeks. Let us learn from our past mistakes lest we repeat them.

Thank you for your attention. I am happy to answer any of your questions, now or at any time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph Chapman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ralph Chapman