

Aroostook County Residents Opposed to Weak Mining Rules

Lorette and Darrell Adams (Mars Hill)

“We feel Irving’s estimates of job creation and economic impact are greatly exaggerated in comparison to previous estimates by different mining companies from the 1980’s and 1990’s. This appears to be an effort by Irving to influence Mainer’s to degrade our environment for economic gain that will be enjoyed mostly by Irving.”

“This is the only environment we have and destroying it for current and future generations for short term corporate economic gains would be shameful.”

Henry John Bear, Maliseet Tribal Representative (Houlton)

“The Irving Corporation is resisting any changes that will prevent them from accessing metallic minerals in such lands or would raise the cost of accessing or processing metallic mineral supplies in the short term. Instead we should unite to preserve as many of the remnant open spaces and portions of watershed as possible, despite the promise of 50, 70 or 700 jobs that might be created for a very short period of time, relative to the many, many thousands of years of permanent watershed pollution and habitat destruction that will certainly occur...”

Alice Bolstridge (Presque Isle)

“All evidence I trust indicates that we in Aroostook County will bear the environmental consequences of an open-pit mine at Bald Mountain and that all Maine taxpayers will bear the economic consequences of clean up long after the miners and the corporate profits have gone. The tobacco industry denied for generations that smoking is hazardous to human health, to preserve profits. The fossil fuel industries still try to deny that carbon emissions cause global warming, to preserve profits. Please look at all the evidence. The proposed mining rules from DEP do not adequately protect water, air or wildlife from mining pollution, nor do they protect Maine taxpayers from the cost of cleanup.”

Brenda Commander, Chief of Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (Houlton)

“As an elder and an elected leader of my Tribe, I am charged with the responsibility of protecting the health and welfare of our members and sustaining and renewing our traditional ways and ancient cultural ties to the environment. I want to emphasize again that Maliseets are river people. Water is sacred to us. The health and welfare of all Maine people depends on clean water. I urge you to pass rules that will strongly safeguard this precious natural resource.”

Jeremiah Leary (Perham)

Both [Fish Lake and Machias stream] river systems are vital to the economy and healthy lives in our county. They offer chances for jobs in tourism, fishing derbies, guiding, camp sales and other possibilities. Also the local agricultural economy is dependent on clean water and air. The economic issue is not “no jobs versus mine jobs”, but about loss of clean jobs. I beg you to vote no on the relaxed rules as now proposed... Let the industry prove it can exist in this sensitive site without the need for you to surrender your role of protection.”

Carol McKnight (Presque Isle)

“Irving’s ‘new water detox technology’ [and] ‘reverse osmosis’ didn’t work in the west where the climate is hot and dry [...]. Here in Northern Maine, we are getting more rain than in the past. With all of our lakes and rivers, our groundwater goes everywhere. Irving’s open-pit mine is exactly what we don’t need.”

Stephen Miller (Westmanland)

“As a species we are profoundly interconnected with all of the remarkable diversity of life in this world. Feeling and respecting that connection is an essential part of the experience of being human. Yet it is precisely that connection which is being torn apart by destructive and ill-considered projects worldwide. As we damage the world we damage ourselves and yet the pace of this willful destruction continues to accelerate. I find it very disturbing that the Maine Legislature in collaboration with Irving Corporation is working to weaken our mining regulations so that this project can be implemented.”

Shelly Mountain (Mapleton)

“I live in Mapleton in Aroostook County. I am originally from Portage Lake. My husband and children are from Portage, my family history in Portage goes back several generations, and I own a camp on Portage Lake. Jim Irving promises that when all is said and done he will drink the water from Bald Mountain. That is not reassuring to me at all. We do not need empty promises. We need strongly worked rules that ensure a healthy and intact environment that will support the industries (agriculture, tourism, and logging) that currently provide employment in Aroostook. Irving claims that new technology exists to make mining safe for the environment. If that is true, I do not understand why environmental laws would need to be relaxed to accommodate it. I hope that we aren’t at a point where Maine environmental law is determined by a foreign corporation that only values Aroostook County for how easily its resources are exploited for profits.”

Cara O’Donnell, Water Resources Specialist, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (Houlton)

“I live in Aroostook County and work for the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, where I have been the Water Resources Specialist for ten years. My degree is in Watershed Science from Colorado State University. [My] opposition stems from the very vague and ineffective language describing the water quality standards provided in these Rules. The rivers and streams of Maine are categorized as quote “gaining” streams, meaning they are fed water from groundwater, versus a “losing stream” that loses water to the ground. Allowing contamination of ground-water and making the assumption that it will NOT make its way into streams and rivers is illogical.”

Pamela and Wayne Sweetser (Presque Isle)

“Open-pit mining such as the Bald Mountain project proposed by Aroostook Timberland which belongs to the J.D. Irving Corporation of Canada, destroys or threatens existing environment-based economies and lifestyles. It will require heavy taxpayer investment to contain the inevitable pollution. There is no guarantee or even a convincing promise from Irving that significant numbers of local workers will be “qualified” for employment in the Bald Mountain project. Maine’s clean environment is the basis for viable economic endeavors that depend on our renewable resources.”

Craig Terrell (Portage Lake)

“Maine’s environment and economy are inextricably linked. Maine’s rich outdoor heritage and natural scenic beauty is at the heart of our tourism industry, which is a critical part of our economy. Thousands of Maine people depend of our state’s vibrant natural resources to make their living such as guides, lobstermen and sporting camp owners. Poorly regulated metal mining in Maine is a direct threat to those industries and to the natural resources they depend on.”