



For Immediate Release
January 27, 2012

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DESPITE SUBSTANTIAL FLAWS, STRIP MINE BILL ADVANCES

Madison – Last night, after hours of debate, the Republican majority in the state Assembly passed a strip mining bill, AB 426, on a party-line vote. This bill would significantly gut permitting guidelines and environmental protections and exclude citizens from the permitting process.

“This bill was written behind closed doors at the request of one out of state mining company, excluding the public and communities impacted in the process,” stated Rep. Chris Taylor. “It eliminates citizen participation in the mining process, weakens Wisconsin’s water and other environmental protections, threatens public health and puts local communities at risk of having to pay the price tag of the environmental destruction that results.”

This bill, if it became law, could impact some of Wisconsin’s most important industries, such as tourism, agriculture and forestry, which depend on clean water, soil and intact habitats. Tourism alone is a \$12 billion industry, bringing approximately 300,000 jobs to the state. Local leaders from the communities impacted, including Mellon, Ashland and Bayfield are on record as opposing this bill because of its failure to significantly address local economic concerns and protect public health and the environment.

AB 426 could potentially lengthen the permitting process because it conflicts with the federal Clean Water Act, which would require federal intervention and an additional permitting process. The Republican representatives also never considered federal tribal treaties that are in place and illegally impacted by the bill.

“Despite 6 straight months of job losses, the only jobs bill put forth by the Republicans conflicts with tribal treaty rights and federal law, creating a legal morass that most likely will never result in creating one single Wisconsin job. This is another example of Governor Walker and Republicans moving Wisconsin in the wrong direction,” concluded Taylor.

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