

Reps. Sinicki, Ohnstad, Bowen: Labor Committee Democrats stand against destructive mining bill

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Labor Committee Democrats Stand Against Destructive Mining Bill

Republicans with doubts still voted "yes"

MADISON – Representatives Sinicki (D-Milwaukee), Ohnstad (D-Kenosha), and Bowen (D-Milwaukee) released this statement after Assembly Labor Committee members voted on party lines this morning to advance Assembly Bill 499, the destructive Industrial Acid Mining bill.

“We are very disappointed that every Republican on the Labor Committee, even those who have expressed concerns about AB 499, voted today to repeal Wisconsin’s bipartisan, highly effective, “Prove It First” Mining Law. They did so in spite of the fact that the mining industry has been unable so far to meet the standards set by current law. No company has been able to provide an example of a sulfide mine that has not caused pollution. Why then did all the Republicans vote to eliminate the common-sense protections of our current law? Was it to aid and abet America’s most toxic industry?”

“This risky bill, AB 499, will threaten large Wisconsin economic sectors because it

puts major waterways in harm's way, including popular fisheries and tourism sites in northern Wisconsin like Miller Dam in Taylor County and the Eau Claire Dells in Marathon County. It will allow mining companies to more easily poison such waters and forests we all want to preserve for our children and grandchildren

"AB 499 also eliminates crucial financial guarantees current law requires from mining companies to pay for future toxic clean-ups. It will leave Wisconsin taxpayers on the hook to clean up the mining industry's messes.

"On top of the financial, environmental, and public health risks Republicans are exposing us to, it is shameful that Wisconsin's sovereign tribes were left out of communications in the drafting of this bill. Wisconsin anglers, hunters, outdoors enthusiasts, and anyone who depends on our clean air and water should be very concerned about the disregard shown for their livelihood by legislative Republicans today.

"Because they know this is a bad bill, Committee Republicans defended and approved a number of token amendments that purport to improve it. In fact, AB 499 cannot be improved by mere tweaks. We urge all of our colleagues to vote against this destructive bill when it comes before the full Assembly this Thursday, November 2."