

River Alliance of Wisconsin: Wisconsin Senate chooses mining companies over local communities

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Legislation that guts long-standing protections from acid mine pollution overcame bi-partisan opposition and public opinion to move on to Governor Walker. He has indicated he will sign SB 395 / AB 499.

“Three quarters of Wisconsin voters want to keep laws that protect local waters from permanent damage. People in Stevens Point and Wausau can’t be expected to manage pollution from upstream. And small rural communities don’t have the means to protect themselves and cities downstream from a mining company’s money and power,” stated River Alliance executive director Raj Shukla.

Wisconsin’s economy depends on clean water for industries like agriculture and tourism. Last night the Wisconsin State Senate voted against Wisconsin’s clean water economy, families, farmers, business owners and quality of life. All sulfide mines in water rich environments to date have polluted; history has demonstrated that short-term mining projects cause environmental and economic damage that lasts longer than the life of a mine and burdens taxpayers with the cost of cleanup. This legislation profits foreign mining companies and poses real dangers to water we drink and use every day.

River Alliance of Wisconsin encourages municipalities to adopt measures that protect themselves and neighboring communities from the risks of mining projects. This especially applies to Marathon and Taylor counties where Canadian mining company Aquila Resources has plans to implement sulfide mines. Shukla stated, “The state government has put the entire burden of protecting Wisconsin waters on small, rural communities. The River Alliance of Wisconsin will provide support to help local governments protect themselves from the dangers shortsighted politicians have created.”

About the River Alliance of Wisconsin:

Formed in 1993, River Alliance of Wisconsin is a statewide non-profit, non-partisan citizen advocacy organization that empowers people to protect and restore Wisconsin waters. The organization’s membership includes more than 2,500 individuals and businesses and more than 80 local watershed groups – one of the largest memberships of statewide water groups in the country. For more information, visit www.wisconsinrivers.org.