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Their Trick is No Treat for Wisconsin's Natural Resources

Big Money Polluters Masquerading as Environmental Advocates

MADISON – On Halloween, it can be difficult to discern who is friendly and who isn't.

Two newly formed front groups masquerading as environmental advocacy organizations are trying to trick people into supporting big money polluters, like the sulfide mining industry and corporate factory farms. Unfortunately, there's no treat, only polluted drinking water, rivers, and lakes.

The Wisconsin Water Alliance and the Natural Resources Development Association appear to be front groups with ties to powerful business, agriculture, and manufacturing interests.

"These groups are using an outdated, unsophisticated 'astroturf' tactic," said Kerry Schumann, executive director. "The fact they exist at all proves the people who concocted them know they can't win in the court of public opinion."

This week, the Assembly is considering a repeal of the state's Prove It First Mining law – Sen. Tom Tiffany's Industrial Acid Mining Bill. The fake organizations support that bill, which poses serious threats to the future of Wisconsin's environment and public health. They also support a bill rolling back wetlands protections across the state. Yet, the groups claim to be environmental advocates.

The Water Alliance is run by the CEO of Animart; a lobbyist at Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce; president of the Wisconsin Paper Council, and a lawyer for MilkSource LLC, an operator of factory farms throughout Wisconsin – and a major donor to Gov. Scott Walker.

The Natural Resources Development Association seems to be an association of one man: an employee of a public relations firm run by a former Walker campaign advisor.

"The people who formed these fake 'organizations' clearly feel their true ambitions – to give away our state's precious natural resources to corporations and to roll back decades of effective environmental protections – don't sit well with a Wisconsin public that values its air, land, and water. So, these front groups steal the hard won integrity of real conservation and

environmental organizations then try to pass it off as their own legitimate advocacy,” concluded Schumann.

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Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to electing conservation leaders, holding decision makers accountable, and encouraging lawmakers to champion conservation policies that effectively protect Wisconsin's public health and natural resources.

You can follow legislation impacting natural resources on our Conservation Vote Tracker, a real-time accountability tool that provides you with a complete picture of what conservation issues are in play and how legislators are performing: <http://conservationvoters.org/vote-tracker/>