

WAVE  
Catherine Parker, President  
322 W. Ohio Street  
Marquette, MI 49855

March 24, 2011

Governor Rick Snyder  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Snyder,

We are an organization of Upper Peninsula citizens seeking to protect our water resources and establish a sustainable, profitable future for our region. We appeal for your immediate help.

Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company, a subsidiary of Rio Tinto, a London-based mining company, has acquired the necessary permits to begin mining on the Yellow Dog Plains in Marquette County. Despite numerous pending lawsuits, it has built many above-ground structures and may soon begin excavating the mine, which will cause irreparable harm.

The ore body lies directly underneath a premiere Lake Superior tributary, and the entire region is a destination for outdoor enthusiasts, hunters, and fishermen. This mine puts surface water, ground water and air quality at risk—along with the numerous and permanent jobs that come from the current recreation and tourism businesses.

At the Eagle Mine site, on the Yellow Dog Plains, the DEQ's own experts have warned that the roof of the mine is likely to collapse, taking the Salmon Trout River with it, imperiling workers and causing great harm to the ecology of the region. This mine design problem is fixable.

This information and much more, has been available to the DNRE for years. Kennecott's permits to mine were approved as a result of a seriously flawed process that did not address numerous and extremely serious deficiencies in their application.

In fact, the Environmental Impact Statement, commissioned and paid for by Kennecott, did not include a comprehensive impact or safety study and failed to take into account the potentially affected area outside the mining area. Both of these are requirements of Michigan's mining law, regulating nonferrous metallic sulfide mining.

The state agency responsible for reviewing permit applications under this new law is failing abysmally in its test case and is setting a very dangerous precedent. With the recent increase in mining exploration and the granting of new mineral leases by the DNRE, this has become a matter of grave and widespread concern. The cumulative effects from a multitude of poorly regulated mining projects would be devastating, both economically and ecologically, and could be irreversible.

**For these reasons we urge you to use your authority to issue an executive order calling for an immediate halt to activity at the Eagle Mine site until a complete impact study can be prepared by EPA mining experts. This review should encompass all aspects of the Eagle Project, including mining, transport, and milling of ore, as well as other potential mining projects in the vicinity of the Yellow Dog Plains.**

We urge you to take the long view for Michigan's good. Please, do not jump at the fast money as the previous administration did. We must have a long-term, strategic plan for Michigan's well-being. Mining may be part of it, but the Eagle mine, as permitted, absolutely should not be.

Allowing the development of the Eagle mine to continue or to close the mine down is, quite simply, a question involving life and death choices. Physicians and public health professionals have testified repeatedly that our health and the health of our children is being placed at great risk by the Eagle mine for generations to come. We think you would agree that we should not compromise the lives of our people for a short term economic gain.

We would like very much to meet with you to briefly discuss our reasons for requesting your intervention in the matter of the Eagle Mine Project. Time is of the essence, since Kennecott intends to blast through Eagle Rock, a sacred site leased to them by the previous administration, to create the mine's portal, forever desecrating a site of enormous spiritual importance to members of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and to all Anishinaabe people.

We have collected nearly 15,000 signatures from citizens who have expressed concern about the risks posed by this mine and/or the future of freshwater in our region.

Please respond by April 8, 2011.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

cc: Congressman Dan Benishek  
State Senator Tom Casperson  
Tayoka Hall, Office of Environmental Justice, EPA  
State Representative Matt Huuki  
Lisa Jackson, EPA Administrator  
Senator Carl Levin  
State Representative Steven Lindberg  
State Representative Ed McBroom  
Senator Debbie Stabenow  
Chris Swartz, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Tribal President

