

## Amy Rostkowycz

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**From:** Andrea Rich <andreakay25@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2019 11:41 AM  
**To:** Amy Rostkowycz  
**Subject:** Written testimony regarding HB4227

I am writing to you with concerns regarding a proposed bill regarding mining that is being spread throughout Michigan. It is being advertised as a positive for the state, however, as someone who is currently fighting a Metallic Sulfide Mine in Menominee County, The Back 40 Project by Aquila Resources, this bill also raises some grave concerns. I am forwarding you some additional information on this matter, and hope that you will review it prior to making any decisions regarding supporting this potentially dangerous bill.

The link to review is posted below, the information is as follows:

Mining Action Group | The Mining Action Group is a volunteer, grassroots effort to defend the clean water and wild places of Michigan's Upper Peninsula from the dangers of sulfide mining – previously known as Save the Wild U.P.

## Is “Michigan’s Mining Future” a Shared Vision?

Posted on [February 22, 2019](#) by [Save the Wild UP](#)  
[Reply](#)

MARQUETTE – Environmental groups working to protect Upper Michigan’s natural resources from the environmental hazards of metallic mining are questioning the intent of the “Michigan’s Mining Future” legislation, introduced by State Rep. Sara Cambensy (D-Marquette).

[House Bill 4227 would create a governor-appointed “Committee on Michigan’s Mining Future.”](#)

The purpose of the advisory-only committee would be to develop “legislative and policy recommendations” to “enhance the growth of the mining, minerals and aggregate industry” and “strengthen and develop a sustainable mining industry in Michigan.”

“House Bill 4227, in its focus on economic development, ignores the scope of environmental problems caused by mining. Environmental groups may be invited to the table, but the make-up of this committee suggests the outcome – more mining – is almost inevitable. Meanwhile, we are still spending hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up after historic mining booms: polluted lakes and streams, abandoned mines, mercury in wetlands, tailings that threaten Lake Superior fisheries, and more. We advise U.P. residents to keep all options open, rather than going head-long into more disastrous mining cycles,” said Horst Schmidt, president of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition.

“We applaud Rep. Cambensy’s effort, but raise cautionary questions about the balance of representation on the committee. A larger vision of wise environmental stewardship is required, and the understanding that we must live within ‘sustainable’ limits in order protect our natural resources,” said Jon Magnuson of the Interfaith Northern Great Lakes Water Stewards.

“This legislation in its current state does not provide a good framework to protect Michigan’s precious natural resources when considering future mining projects,” said Michigan Environmental Council Deputy Policy Director Sean Hammond. “Although this bill does provide a platform for a needed discussion on the future of mining, especially with continued

questions on the implementation of our mining statutes, the way in which it is currently written too heavily favors growing mining, with no mention of natural resource protection. Therefore, we cannot support this bill.”

“I welcome the news that the State may be ready to take a clear-eyed look at mining in the Upper Peninsula. As the district most impacted by metallic mining, we must understand mistakes of the past and address current regulatory challenges, in order to ensure a ‘sustainable’ environment going forward. This bill suggests a foregone conclusion: that mining is central to Michigan’s future. Is that true? I am not convinced that we have a shared vision of Michigan’s future,” said Kathleen Heideman of the Mining Action Group.

“The long-term impacts to the human environment from mining are at least as, if not more important than expanding mining operations in Michigan. But the proposed Committee — *three representatives of the mining industry, a union representative, and two faculty members specializing in geology or mining, versus only two representatives of environmental groups* — would relegate those speaking for the environment to token representation, stacking the deck six to two, plus one position for a recognized Native American representative. We suggest that the committee be expanded to include *two faculty members with specialties in ecology, water quality, wildlife biology, or a related field, and four, rather than two, representatives of environmental organizations*. Only with such a committee makeup will there be a fair balance of interests,” said Jeffrey Towner, board member of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition.

Environmental groups in the U.P. say they were not involved in crafting House Bill 4227.

“In the past 175 years, Michigan’s environment has suffered greatly in the pursuit of mining profits. And in the past ten years, we’ve had enough of the “economy over environment” paradigm, with environmental agencies doing as much to facilitate the exploitation of our public trust resources as they do to protect them,” said Jon Saari, board member of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition. “We look forward to meeting with Representative Cambensy to share our vision of Michigan’s future.”

For more info on House Bill 4227, see <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2019-HB-4227>

<http://savethewildup.org/>

<http://jointherivercoalition.org/>

Thank you for your time, please feel free to call me with any questions.

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