



## HELSELBEIN STATEMENT ON ASSEMBLY PASSAGE OF MINING BILL

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*Contact: 608-266-5340*

“The sad inevitable has occurred: Today the Wisconsin Assembly passed Senate Bill (SB) 1, the mining bill, on a strict party line vote of 58 to 39. The bill now goes to the Governor for his action.

“After almost 9-1/2 hours of debate, SB1 is certain to become law. By introducing this proposal in both houses as the first bill of our new, two year legislative session, the Republican leadership demonstrated their commitment to make this our state law. Unfortunately, they demonstrated no concern for the voices of opposition that include area residents, Tribal members, environmental protection organizations, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

“It is blatantly obvious the heavy hand of the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) and similar organizations helped to move the bills forward at breakneck speed. The joint Assembly and Senate Mining Committees held only one public hearing in Madison, and refused to schedule further hearings either in Madison or elsewhere within Wisconsin.

“Rather than creating jobs, this GOP bill will invite lawsuits that challenge the weakening of Wisconsin’s constitutional environmental protections. Although construction of the Gogebic Range Mine will be tied up in court for years to come, I am deeply concerned that overall mining standards are severely compromised. Future projects may get unconsidered approval without the important barriers that protected important wetlands and other environmental treasures.

“Today’s end result is contrary to what 95% of my 79<sup>th</sup> District constituents expressed through their messages and comments. Although the final vote moved SB1 forward to the Governor’s desk, I stand encouraged by the passion expressed by my Democratic legislative colleagues. We will continue the uphill struggle to protect the people, the environment, and the future of Wisconsin.”

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