

Red Cliff Mining Task Force Press Release

In response to numerous concerns being voiced in our community, the Red Cliff Tribal Council underscores its commitment to review and respond to all mining projects with a potential to impact Lake Superior, tribal lands and Ceded Territories. The Tribe is actively engaged as a consulting party on several proposed and ongoing mining projects through the activities of the Red Cliff Mining Task Force and governmental authority of the Tribal Council.

As announced by Tribal Chair Rose Gurnoe-Soulier, the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa is opposed to current mining legislation in Wisconsin. The intent of SB1/AB1 is to reduce environmental safeguards in order to recklessly advance mining of the Penokee Range despite overwhelming objections by tribal nations and the general public alike. The proposed legislation poses numerous risks to the tribal lifeway and to the resources that the Red Cliff Tribe relies upon to sustain traditional, cultural and subsistence practices. Substantial doubt exists about whether these risks can be avoided or adequately mitigated. This doubt makes it imprudent to engage in mining activities that can negatively impact treaty protected resources which, once damaged, cannot be replaced.

Degradation of environment for short-term economic gain without regard for long-term economic sustainability is unacceptable. The Red Cliff Tribe shares a co-management responsibility of the Lake Superior fishery with Bad River and the State of Wisconsin to ensure long-term benefits from the resource. This responsibility extends to protection of the established economies of tourism and the fishery that the lake provides. Lake Superior is the lifeblood that Red Cliff depends on for survival. We will not exchange our current economic drivers for mining revenue that cannot be sustained.

Red Cliff is a sovereign nation possessing an indisputable interest in the beneficial resource use of the lands and waters of the Ceded Territories. The Tribe has reserved certain rights guaranteed by perpetual agreement that protect essential resources necessary for the sustainability of the Tribe both now and in the future. No action should place undue risk on these treaty protected resources. The Tribe must be assured that the proposed actions, potential risks and cumulative effects to fisheries, wildlife, recreation and sustainability are identified to determine if any adverse effects will result and that mitigations are adequate.

The state of Wisconsin is undermining tribal sovereignty by not offering appropriate consultation to the native nations disproportionately impacted by the degradation of natural resources guaranteed by treaty rights. It is from this lack of proper consultation that the tribal nations stand in solidarity to protect the largest and most pristine of freshwater seas.

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