



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN
EDUCATION NETWORK

612 W. Main Street, #200
Madison, WI 53703-4714

Phone: (608) 256-0827
<http://www.lwwwi.org>

January 23, 2013

To: Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Forestry, Mining, and Revenue
Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economy and Mining

Re: Opposition to AB 1/SB 1, the mining bill

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin was shocked to learn that there will be only one hearing – in Madison – on AB 1/SB 1, the mining bill. Not holding a hearing in the area of the state that is most affected by the legislation is a breach of public process. This utter disrespect for public input is reflected in the legislation itself, which weakens environmental protections while reducing opportunities for citizen comment or legal redress.

Current mining law recognizes that mining inevitably leads to pollution and destruction of natural areas, yet offers reasonable environmental protection if the Department of Natural Resources has the time, resources and information needed to make a vigilant assessment.

It is bad government to tie the hands of the experts at the DNR, who use reason and science to balance the public interest in a safe and healthy environment with the public interest in developing resources. This bill takes away the agency's ability to get the information it needs for rational decision-making. On the contrary, the legislation explicitly states that whatever information the mining company provides in its application is *de facto* sufficient. Then it goes on to require the agency to allow destruction of wetlands, groundwater and surface water for the iron mining industry.

The mining bill guts sound government, which is based on checks and balances, along with facts and reason. It constitutes a give-away of our natural heritage and our civic legacy. We did not support this approach to a mining bill last year, and we still do not support such an approach.

We oppose AB 1/SB 1 and urge you to do the same.

Thank you.