

Senator Casperson offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 85.

A resolution to encourage support for Aquila Resources' Back Forty Proposed Mine and express confidence that the proposed mine meets federal and state requirements to protect the environment, natural resources, and public health.

Whereas, Protecting water quality, addressing economic sustainability, and enforcing strict regulatory standards are legitimate priorities and merit thorough review by lawmakers, regulators, industry, and stakeholders; and

Whereas, Aquila Resources' Back Forty Project is a proposed zinc, gold, copper, and silver mine and processing facility that will be constructed near the Menominee River on approximately 580 acres close to Stephenson, Michigan; and

Whereas, Modern-day mining can boost our state and local economies while providing for a balanced use of natural resources. Aquila Resources' Back Forty Project will enhance continued economic growth in the Upper Peninsula without sacrificing the environment, other natural resources, or public health; and

Whereas, The Michigan Legislature has adopted laws to ensure that today's mining is carried out safely and responsibly, without adversely impacting the environment, enabling local communities, families, and institutions to prosper and grow for future generations of Michiganders. These laws for nonferrous metallic mineral mining bolstered our state's already-strong environmental standards and regulations, arguably making them the most stringent standards in the world; and

Whereas, Clean, safe water to support fish, wildlife, and human needs is important to everyone. Protection of the Menominee River during and after mining is particularly important to nearby communities and tribal groups. Preventing adverse impacts to the river from potential acid rock drainage related to mining should be a top priority in designing and managing the Back Forty Project; and

Whereas, The Back Forty Project will employ systems and advanced technologies to prevent acid rock drainage and treat water if prevention is not obtainable. Double-walled piping and lined retention basins with leak detection and collection systems will be used to prevent water that comes into contact with mining activities from going into the ground or into nearby water bodies. All water on site, including rain and snowmelt, will be collected and treated at an on-site wastewater treatment plant that will use technologies that far surpass typical municipal wastewater treatment plants. The purified water will be tested and monitored to ensure that it meets all safety and environmental requirements before being discharged back into the river; and

Whereas, The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has thoroughly reviewed the Back Forty Project and granted three of the four permits necessary to mine in the state of Michigan. The nonferrous metallic mineral mining permit, the air quality permit-to-install, and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for water discharges will ensure the environment is protected. The fourth and final permit is a wetlands permit; and

Whereas, Local communities will benefit from tax revenue generated by the Back Forty mine. It has been estimated that approximately \$20 million in severance taxes will be paid annually during operation to local communities (65 percent) and the state (35 percent). The state's portion will be directed to the Rural Development Fund. The fund issues grants for infrastructure and development projects related to the expansion or maintenance of agriculture, forestry, mining, oil and gas production, and tourism industries; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we encourage support by leaders at the local, regional, state, and federal level for the Aquila Resources' Back Forty Project and express confidence that the mine and processing facility meets federal and state requirements to protect the environment, natural resources, and public health; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Governor of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin state representatives and senators representing Marinette County, the Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the members of the Menominee County Board of Commissioners, the members of the Marinette County Board of Supervisors, and the chairs of the county boards of supervisors for Brown, Door, Florence, Kewaunee, and Oconto Counties in Wisconsin.