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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gogebic Taconite Asbestos Cover-up Shows Independent Testing Is Required

Madison: In a recent Milwaukee Journal Sentinel story, (*Mine firm questions protester's role as a state geologist*, Oct. 12, 2013) Gogebic Taconite (GTac) launched an outrageous personal attack on a scientist associated with the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. Sampling of rock from land leased by GTac for a proposed mine was recently confirmed to contain asbestos, a hazardous material known to cause lung cancer.

"GTac's initial reaction to the discovery of asbestos at the mine site should be to welcome additional research and testing and to create a plan to protect workers and the public from the health threats associated with asbestos. Instead, GTac's reaction is to try to cover-up the discovery by discrediting the data and by attacking a scientist who had nothing to do with the testing," said Dave Blouin, Mining Committee Chair. "A responsible mining company would first be concerned about their potential workers and their neighbors in the area; attacking sound scientific research would not be the initial concern of a good corporate neighbor."

GTac has alleged bias in the sampling despite the fact that testing showing asbestos is present was "done correctly" according to State Geologist James Robertson. Robertson stated the scientist had nothing to do with the testing. GTac has offered no scientific proof to counter the finding of asbestos in the ore it is interested in mining.

GTac's repeated attacks on scientific study of its proposal demonstrate it cannot be trusted to disclose data that would show the proposal is unsafe. GTac recently threatened the Bad River Ojibwe Tribe with legal action to prevent an independent scientist from identifying wetlands in the mine site. Independent testing by professionals should be required immediately to determine the extent of the threat posed by asbestos at the site.

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Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is made up of 15,000 members and supporters working to promote clean energy and protect water resources in Wisconsin.