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NEWS RELEASE

Sierra Club John Muir Chapter
222 South Hamilton St, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 256-0565 <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org>

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Contact: Shahla Werner, PhD., Director (608) 256-0565
Dave Blouin, Mining Committee Chair (608) 220-4040

Sierra Club opposes Tiffany's Sweeping Attack on Local Control

Madison: The Sierra Club today announced opposition to unprecedented legislation introduced by Senator Tom Tiffany that attacks Wisconsin's established tradition of local government control. Tiffany's legislation establishes broad and sweeping limits on local governments in Wisconsin facing threats to air and water from frac sand mining, iron mining and any form of development under the guise of "regulatory certainty," the now familiar Republican euphemism for deregulation of industry.

Among the many limits proposed, Tiffany's legislation would bar any local government from regulating the use of explosives in both frac sand and iron mining and was introduced on the same day as Ashland County began consideration of local regulation of the use of explosives in rock now proven to contain asbestiform minerals (minerals with asbestos-like fibers). The legislation also directly attacks the recent Wisconsin Supreme Court decision upholding the right of local governments to regulate and even prohibit a frac sand mine proposal.*

"Senator Tiffany has launched an all-out assault on Wisconsin's tradition of local control that threatens natural resources in every corner of the state," said, Shahla Werner, PhD, John Muir Chapter Director, "Tiffany has outrageously declared war on Wisconsin citizens by taking away the rights of local governments to protect the health and welfare of their residents and natural resources."

Tiffany's draft legislation, LRB 13-3146/1 can be found at:
http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/documents/13-3146_1.pdf

Tiffany's request for co-sponsors can be found at:
<http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/documents/TiffanyLRB3146Cosponsorshipemail.pdf>

Tiffany's legislation (LRB 13-3146_1) includes provisions that:

- Prohibit cities, villages, towns, and counties, county utility district, town sanitary district, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district or metropolitan sewage district from establishing or enforcing permits, regulations, restrictions of use, and monitoring of their air and water for any proposed activity (emphasis added).

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- Prohibit cities, villages, towns, and counties from establishing or enforcing permits, regulations, restrictions of use, and monitoring of the use of explosives in mining – both frac sand and iron mining.
- Prohibit cities, villages, towns, and counties from establishing or enforcing a non-metallic mining ordinance that would create standards for air and water quality, enforcement and monitoring.
- Limits liability for road damages caused by non-metallic mining trucking and limits financial assurances that cities, villages, towns, and counties can impose on those operations.

“Senator Tiffany proves again that he serves the interests of Gogebic Taconite and the expanding frac sand mining industry over those of his own constituents. It’s no coincidence that Tiffany’s legislation to bar local governments from regulating explosives comes the same day that Ashland County began discussion of regulation of blasting in rock with asbestos-like minerals,” said Dave Blouin, Chapter Mining Committee Chair, “Worse yet, his reckless and irresponsible proposal guts local control over air and water protections over any kind of proposal threatening Wisconsin residents.”

* Wisconsin Supreme Court, February 8, 2012, Town of Cooks Valley Nonmetallic Mining Ordinance: *Zwiefelhofer v. Town of Cooks Valley*, 2012 WI 7.

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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.