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# NEWS RELEASE

Sierra Club John Muir Chapter  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Sierra Club Statement on GTac Land Closure Tax Break Approval**

**Madison:** The Sierra Club released the following statement on the passage of SB 278, extreme special interest legislation that will prohibit public access to public lands in Ashland and Iron Counties owned by speculators who have leased their lands to Gogebic Taconite (GTac).

“As one of their last acts of 2013, Assembly Republicans gave Gogebic Taconite yet another special favor that tramples the rights of the public,” said Shahla Werner, PhD, John Muir Chapter Director. “SB 278 gives the owners of the land GTac leases a nearly \$1 million tax break to close public lands while creating a logistical and financial nightmare for local law enforcement who will bear the burden of this unnecessary legislation. The legislation grants the mining landowners special rights that none of the more than 30,000 law-abiding landowners in the Managed Forest Law program can take advantage of.”

The Sierra Club urges Governor Walker to veto SB 278 as unnecessary and poor public policy that threatens to set important legal and policy precedents regarding regulation of lands maintained in the state Managed Forest Law system.

Gogebic Taconite does not own property in Wisconsin. It has leased land and mineral rights from three property owners and Iron County (surface rights only):

- RGGGS Land and Minerals, Ltd. L. P., PO Box 1266, Virginia, MN, 55792
- La Pointe Iron Co., 3920 13<sup>th</sup> Ave E., Hibbing, MN, 55746
- Chester Company, Limited, 3920 13<sup>th</sup> Ave E., Hibbing, MN, 55746

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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.*