



## Michigan DNR Refuses to Lease State-owned Land to Risky Mine in Upper Peninsula

**MARQUETTE, MICH. (January 10)**—The National Wildlife Federation today applauded Michigan Department of Natural Resources Director Rebecca Humphries for refusing to lease State-owned land for a controversial proposed mine in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

“The DNR has made the right decision to not rubber stamp a risky mine that has proven deadly to rivers, streams and communities all over the world,” said Michelle Halley, National Wildlife Federation attorney. “It’s not worth the risk to our economy, health and way of life.”

The Department of Natural Resources declined to make a decision on a land lease after the mining company, Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company, failed to provide information that the agency requested, including response plans in the event of a mine collapse or groundwater contamination that could result from acid mine drainage.

“There is no good reason for the state to allow a foreign-owned company to fence off public land for an indefinite number of years,” said Halley. “The DNR is to be applauded for acting on behalf of citizens and the long-term future of Michigan.”

The land lease application would have allowed Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company to construct surface facilities for a sulfide mining operation on state-owned property in northwestern Marquette County. The property, located on the Yellow Dog Plains, is currently a popular choice for hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, berry picking and other public uses.

“I commend the DNR for not turning a blind eye to the deficiencies in Kennecott’s permit and having the courage to not automatically green-light a permit to allow this risky mine to move forward,” said Cynthia Pryor, executive director of Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve

Opponents of the land lease noted that it was unprecedented for the State of Michigan to allow an open-ended lease for private corporate gain, particularly when the proposed use was likely to result in long-term pollution.

In addition to possibly finding a new site for surface facilities, further obstacles prevent Kennecott from constructing the mine. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notified Kennecott in 2006 that an additional permit would be required by the federal agency. Lawsuits and contested cases have been filed against the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for issuing permits allowing the sulfide mine.

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