

Leadership needed

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The Mining Journal

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To the Journal editor:

I submitted a letter to Gov. Snyder urging him to issue an executive order to immediately halt activity at the Eagle Project site until the following points are addressed. This letter supports a citizen coalition WAVE letter to Snyder on March 24.

1. Cumulative impacts. There should be a comprehensive impact study of the mine, mill and road, and six prospective adjacent projects that all add up. This includes impacts to freshwater, wetlands, social well-being and culture (including federally entrusted treaty rights).
2. Short- and long-term costs and benefits. The Eagle Project may offer needed temporary employment, but what will be the long-term costs and impacts on jobs? How will the tourism, recreation, gaming and other industries be impacted and realistically co-exist with large-scale extractive industry? Who will pay to clean up potential damage to natural resources beyond the company's \$17 million dollar assurance bond? An independent short- and long-term cost-benefit study should be commissioned.
3. A state mining tax. Kennecott - a subsidiary of Rio Tinto based in London - plans to profit billions from the Eagle ore body. What does Michigan expect to get in return with apparently no mining tax law?
4. Mitigation of a religious Native American site: Migi zii wa sin (Eagle Rock). Michigan Administrative Law Judge Patterson recommended that "provisions be made to avoid direct impacts to Eagle Rock that may interfere with religious practices thereon." The National Congress of American Indians has called for federal and state action to guarantee preservation of Eagle Rock from Kennecott.

It's possible to envision alternative sustainable development opportunities for Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Traditional economic theorists believed economic growth to be dependent upon external capital and extraction of more resources.

However, true economic progress is self-sustaining and driven from within, as leading economic scholar Paul Romer terms "endogenous growth theory," where people have an "incentive to go out and discover things like ideas, not to do things like dig up another cubic yard of iron ore."

It's not too late to overcome socially divisive impacts affecting the community by a multinational mining corporation. It shouldn't be a choice between jobs or a healthy environment because we

have a right to demand both. We need leadership from all levels of government - people's lives, cultures and futures are at stake, not just jobs.

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