

THE MINING Journal

Editorial

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Mining ballot initiative is attempt to mislead public

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Most people in the Upper Peninsula realize that mining is an immensely important segment of our economy.

The reason our newspaper has the name mining on the masthead as well as The Daily Mining Gazette in Houghton is because when we started publishing over 160 years ago mining was the cornerstone of the economy.

All communities need to capitalize- in ways that make sense from an economic and environmental point of view - on the natural resources that are marketable in the region.

We also have beautiful forests and clean water in Lake Superior as well as many inland lakes and rivers. Because of our fresh water and beautiful forests, we also have a strong tourism business. Maintaining our forests and water abundant and clean are among the reasons many chose the U.P. to live and work.

Mining provides a base to build our economy around. Lake Superior, inland lakes, rivers and streams along with our forest, provide an environment to attract tourists as well as those of us who choose to live in here.

There is a statewide ballot initiative currently seeking signatures to have Michigan voters decide on the future of some types of mining in the state. The initiative is being masqueraded as necessary to preserve our clean water.

We believe that the residents of the U.P. will not be fooled by the ballot initiative. But, we are concerned that a strong ad campaign in the Lower Peninsula may mislead voters into voting in favor of the initiative without actually realizing what they are voting for.

It appears to us that this initiative, if approved, would take jobs away from the state of Michigan and specifically the Upper Peninsula, at a time when jobs are at a premium.

The state of Michigan currently has among the most stringent rules related to mining in the country. That's why mining and our environment have been able to successfully coexist over the last several hundred years.

Even though we have mining in several locations surrounding Lake Superior, the big lake is often said to be the cleanest of all the Great Lakes. Our rivers and lakes also remain as some of the cleanest in the country.

We believe we can have both mining jobs and clean water because the departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality have significant regulations in place to insure that mining does not damage our environment.

Considering the difficult economy we currently have, we can't afford to lose any more jobs. We encourage everyone to pay close attention to this ballot initiative and get as much information on the issue as possible.

Ask tough questions to insure you realize what's really afoot. We don't believe you would be able to find very many U.P. residents that would not be concerned about having clean water. The clean water strategy is a good one, if they believe that uninformed people will vote on that concept alone.

We believe that if voters do their homework, they will find that this ballot is not about clean water at all. It is about a group of people that have tried and failed to prohibit mining in the state through other means. Now, they're trying this.

This folks assume they can dupe voters on the premise of preserving clean water in the state.

We're betting they can't.

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