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**Wisconsin Assembly Vote on Sulfide Mining Puts Communities & Businesses at Risk**

“Last night, the State Assembly fell short on protecting Wisconsin from sulfide mining pollution. The amended version of the bill they approved (AB 499) still does not provide enough protection to our local communities, tourism industry or the waters of Wisconsin,” stated Raj Shukla, executive Director of the River Alliance of Wisconsin.

**River Alliance of Wisconsin remains strongly opposed to this bill because of the threat it poses to our waters, the economy and Wisconsin’s way of life.** Even with seven amendments, the bill leaves taxpayers at risk of paying for the cleanup when Wisconsin becomes the laboratory for unproven mining technologies. “We know that 40 years is not long enough to protect communities and tax payers from sulfide mining pollution. Sulfide pollution from metallic mines has occurred more than 40 years after mines have been closed. Wisconsinites deserve better protections,” Shukla stated.

AB 499 still repeals the “Prove it First” law. Wisconsin's current sulfide mining laws were approved 20 years ago in a bi-partisan effort to protect Wisconsin’s waters. None of the amendments honors the success of the “Prove it First” law. Since its inception, Wisconsin has not introduced sulfide mine pollution like sulfuric acid and cyanide into local waters and surrounding communities. Governor Walker, Senator Darling and others worked with Democrats and the entire environmental community to pass this common-sense compromise. “Our current laws require mining companies to prove in advance that any sulfide mine has operated safely. This new bill would now allow companies like Aquila Resources to claim to have the technology to be *capable* of operating safely. ‘Capable’ is far from proven and not worth the risk. We shouldn’t bet that out-of-state mining companies will prevent local damage based on a *hope* that technology is “capable” of protecting Wisconsin communities,” Shukla added.

Wisconsin’s agriculture and tourism industries require clean water to thrive, especially in Northern Wisconsin. This bill puts Wisconsin at tremendous risk, while foreign investors and out-of-state corporations benefit. Mines that pollute local resources risk local businesses that sustain communities. Wisconsin needs to maintain an economy built on businesses that enrich our lives and protect our environment. The workforce of the future demands it.

River Alliance of Wisconsin and its members across the state now urge the Senate to consider the interests of the next generation of workers and Wisconsin communities instead of the desires of mining companies and reject SB 395.

**About the River Alliance of Wisconsin:**

Formed in 1993, River Alliance of Wisconsin is a statewide non-profit, non-partisan citizen advocacy organization that works to protect and restore Wisconsin’s rivers and watersheds. The organization’s membership includes more than 2,500 individuals and businesses and more than 80 local watershed groups - one of the largest memberships of statewide river groups in the country. For more information, visit [www.wisconsinrivers.org](http://www.wisconsinrivers.org).