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Chairman Parker, members of the Board of Environmental Protection, I am Alice Bolstridge from Presque Isle, born and grew up in Portage Lake near Bald Mountain. Thank you for this opportunity to speak in opposition to these proposed rules.

I oppose any open-pit mining in Maine unless or until the technology advances sufficiently to protect the environment. I have been researching this issue for several years, and I found no evidence unrelated to profit interests of the mining industry that such mining can be done without irremediable damage to the environment. Recent catastrophes in Brazil, Colorado, and Mount Polly in Canada demonstrate that there is no way to allow open-pit mining and still protect the environment.

Some features in these rules that I oppose are the following: allowing mines in floodplains and flood hazard areas: “financial assurance” not sufficient to cover environmental disasters leaving tax payers to pay for perpetual maintenance; allowing mine operators to cover mine waste with water, much riskier environmentally than dry waste management; allowing mining on public reserved lands and other state-owned lands.

DEP officials say the proposed rules “are needed to address inconsistencies between existing rules and statutes that could hamper the department’s ability to thoroughly review a mining permit application” (PPH). The 2012 law says 1991 rules remain in effect until there are new rules, so I don’t see those inconsistencies.

I do see problematic inconsistencies between environment needs and desires of corporate mining interests. As one Irving advocate put it, the protection rules of 1991 “make it too onerous” for the Canadian corporation to mine Bald Mountain. And the DEP purpose “to support a sustainable economy” stated on Commissioner Mercer’s web page is not compatible with inevitable damage from mining. These rules would put at risk Aroostook’s sustainable economy of outdoor sports, agriculture, and forestry, all dependent on clean water. Far more long-term sustainable jobs would be at risk than could be gained by a mine with a temporary life.