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TO: Maine Board of Environmental Protection

This is the third time I have attended a meeting of the Board of Environmental Protection to discuss a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulation that would allow open pit mining in Maine. The first time I spoke in 2013, I stated that I had a nightmare in 2012 when the State Legislature passed a new mining regulation that weakens the regulations that were put into effect after the disasters at the Callahan mine in Brooksville and the Kerramerican Mine in Blue Hill in the 1970s. Since then the Legislature has decided twice not to allow open pit mining in our state, and here I am again for the DEP's third attempt, so my nightmare has become a recurring one.

The latest DEP attempt at allow open pit mining regulations has changed them, but the questions remain as to why the DEP thinks there's not a problem having open pit mining in a state with as much water, in the form of lakes, streams, rivers, and aquifers, as Maine has. The risk in Maine is the same as it is throughout our country. In the United States alone, government and company data document 40 existing mines that will contaminate 17-27 billion gallons of water every year forever. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Toxics Release Inventory, metal mining is the nation's #1 toxic polluter. (source: <https://www.earthworksaction.org/issues/detail/mining#V9glF5grLGi>). Here in Maine the Karamerican mine leaked 10-20,000 pounds of zinc per year, and almost 40 years after the mining ended, the taxpayers paid to have it cleaned up by capping it (which is still being monitored to be sure the cap is working). The Callahan mine hasn't been cleaned up after 40 years at a cost of \$23 million of taxpayers' money. Neither of these mines made enough money, except for their owners, to justify the expense to taxpayers or the results of the pollution they caused.

If the reason for allowing open pit mines is to provide Mainers with jobs, the Kerramerican mine provided only 100 jobs for five years even though they promised 200-300 jobs. The jobs that will be lost when the open pit mines fail far outnumber any the mines would provide. Our state relies on tourists – it's one of our biggest industries. The economic benefit of the natural resources in Maine is tremendous. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, fishing alone brought \$257 million to the Maine economy in 2006.

Nobody in Las Vegas would make a bet that an open pit mine will NOT fail. There are too many failures of the percentage of mines in our country to bet a new one won't fail as well. When they fail, history has shown that the mining company doesn't even come close to having the money to clean up the mess. In fact, they tend to go bankrupt and leave it to the state and federal taxpayers to clean up their mess, and the "mess" can last into perpetuity. Why are we even discussing this again?