



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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NIEA Resolution 2017- #5

TITLE: OPPOSITION TO AQUILA RESOURCES' BACK FORTY MINE PROJECT DUE TO IMPACT ON LAND, WATER, AND EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1970 for the purpose of advocating, planning, and promoting the unique and special educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, NIEA as the largest national Indian organization of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, provides a forum to discuss and act upon issues affecting the education of Indian and Native people; and

WHEREAS, through its unique relationship with Indian nations and tribes, the federal government has a fiduciary responsibility to meet the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, Aquila Resources, Inc., a Canadian based company, is seeking approvals from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to mine gold, zinc, copper, silver and other minerals in Lake Township, Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the mining project known as the "Back Forty Mine Project" would consist of an open pit mine within 150 feet of the Menominee River, the largest river system in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and a major Lake Michigan tributary that forms the Wisconsin-Michigan border and flows into Green Bay; and

WHEREAS, Aquila Resources, Inc. proposes to utilize open-pit mining extraction and removal processes which have historically caused detrimental impacts to water, environment, wildlife, and animals; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes and its tributaries including the Menominee River are relied upon for clean water, religious practices, fishing, economic development, agriculture, and tourism; and

WHEREAS, the mouth of the Menominee River is recognized as the place of origin of the Menominee People, and the Menominee River including the area of the proposed Back Forty Mine is historically and culturally significant to the Menominee People due to the existence of cultural properties by way of former villages, burial sites, mound groups, funerary objects, raised agricultural fields and garden beds; and

WHEREAS, adverse impacts of the Back Forty Mine would not be geographically limited to the State of Michigan, but would be felt by Wisconsin residents, Tribal Nations, and other Great Lakes users; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Back Forty Mine poses significant and detrimental threats to the area's environment and places of historic, religious and cultural significance to the Menominee people; and

WHEREAS, Native students are more likely to succeed in the classroom and beyond when they have access to education options that integrate tribal history, culture, and language; and

WHEREAS, the destruction of historic and culturally significant sites as a result of the Back Forty Mine would negatively impact culture-based education practices for the Menominee People and Tribal Nations in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the threats associated with the proposed Back Forty Mine far outweigh the short-term benefits associated with the proposed Back Forty Mine and justify denial of the permits; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that that the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) hereby declares strong opposition to the Back Forty Mine; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NIEA until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was duly considered and passed by the National Indian Education Association on October 7, 2017 at which a quorum of the membership was present.



Yatibaey Evans
President