

Arleigh Kraus  
Warren  
LD 2251

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Joint Committee of Taxation

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee of Taxation. My name is Arleigh Kraus, I am a scientist with a degree in biochemistry, an organic farmer, and business owner in Warren. I am a board member of CARMA which is Citizens Against Residential Mining Activities as well as working with several other experts in mining and policy across the state.

I come before you today in opposition to LD 2251 An Act to Amend the Mining Excise Tax Laws.

I was recently made aware of a clause in the Maine State Constitution which states in Section 20. Mining Excise Tax Trust Fund. The principal amount of the Mining Excise Tax Trust Fund or any successor fund may not be expended unless the expenditure is approved in a separate measure by a 2/3 vote of all the members elected to each House of the Legislature and by the Governor. This seems to me to be a constitutional matter which requires the attention of the attorney general's office before proceeding.

Specifically concerns with LD 2251 include the following points.

I question why there is a proposed sales tax exemption for mining equipment. In 2022 the top 40 global mining companies generated a net profit of 153 billion dollars. Sales tax exemptions do make sense in some circumstances such as for farmers where net profit is significantly low in comparison to the labor put in. Exemption of equipment sales tax for a multi billion dollar industry is once again a leg up for the financially elite to take what they want with no consequence.

The proposed 3.5% mining excise tax rate appears to be far too low for such a tremendous burden on our citizens, municipalities and infrastructure. I would like to ask how this percentage was determined. We are not similar to other states with metallic mineral mining in that Maine is extremely wet and we have sulfidic ore capable of generating acid mine runoff quickly. The state of Maine is still paying for the Callahan mine cleanup decades after its closure.

How will municipalities with metallic mining operations access funding to assist with maintenance and updates to infrastructure and critical services for their communities if the Mining Impact Assistance Fund is eliminated? What will the process be for funding grants to be available to those municipalities with mining operations.

I, along with others who I work with, are highly concerned with the cavalier approach being taken to entice and pave the way for the destruction of Maine by mining companies and the false promise of green energy technology. By lowering the barrier to entry so enormously we are waving a checkered flag to prospective companies. The state and its inhabitants will suffer greatly from exposure to carcinogenic heavy metal dust, poisoned streams, wells, and waterways, and contaminated land. This is not a question of if it is a question of when.

Does technology require critical minerals of course it does, but it should not at the expense of our citizens and habitats in Maine.

Respectfully,  
Arleigh A. Kraus

Reference:

Here are some new battery technologies which do not require the use of lithium and other metallic minerals :

Aqueous aluminum radical batteries

These batteries are non-toxic, safe, and efficient. They are made with water-based

electrolytes, stable organic radicals, and Lewis acid-dominated aqueous electrolyte  $\text{Al}(\text{OTf})_3$ . The water-based electrolytes make the batteries fire-retardant and air-stable.

#### Saltwater batteries

These batteries use saltwater instead of toxic metals and other materials that most lead-acid or lithium-ion batteries use.

#### Alsym batteries

These batteries are non-flammable and non-toxic by design, using readily available materials. They avoid many of the issues that surround lithium-ion batteries and use no lithium or cobalt.