

Spencer LD 795 Testimony in Opposition

Dear Chairs Tepler and Doudera and Members of the ENR Committee,

My name is Ed Spencer and I have lived in West Old Town since 1977. During my time here I have witnessed the damage done by those creating loopholes in Maine law at the behest of well-meaning legislators and those with vested interests that would harm Maine citizens. LD 795 fits that category.

Maine has some of the strictest mining rules in America, which complement our relatively pristine environment. Mining activities are deleterious to the land, water and life forms, including humans. Our wet climate makes it very dangerous to expose minerals that were buried beneath the surface to the forces of nature and often result in acidic runoff.

There seem to be concerted efforts to relax rules in order to facilitate the extraction of lithium from our environment. At present, lithium is important for battery storage of electricity. However, there are efforts underway to develop better energy storage systems that do not rely on lithium. Mining booms and the following busts have been damaging to both our environment and sustainable development of our natural resources.

We should not be changing Maine Mining laws for the benefit of a few. If these minerals are so precious, then let their mining interests pay the full costs of development, operations and post-closure monitoring. One does not have to go far to observe the large scale devastation caused by poorly regulated mining practices.

My grandfather died in a mine when I was six years old. He was 2000 feet below the surface when he had a heart attack. I wonder if Phelps Dodge even shut down the mine to facilitate his treatment. In my opinion, it is a tossup whether mining companies or waste corporations are the most destructive and least responsible types of companies. Let's not be fooled into granting special privileges or shamed into "doing our part".

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Spencer