

Protect Michigan's Most Beloved State Park, Protect Lake Superior, and Allow the Upper Peninsula to Evolve.

Reject public funding for the Copperwood Mine.

Overview:

A petition of **465,000+ signatures**, a letter signed by **80+ organizations**, the two closest **Michigan Tribal Nations**, and a letter signed by **200+ local residents** all urge you to reject Highland Copper and Wakefield Township's requests for \$50 million in taxpayer funding for the Copperwood Mine, the closest metallic sulfide mine and waste facility to Lake Superior in history, immediately adjacent to the Porcupine Mountains, mainland Michigan's largest and most cherished old growth wilderness area.

This gross misuse of taxpayer money would fund an inexperienced foreign company's mine at the heart of a world-renowned outdoor recreation district and store the waste less than 2 miles from Lake Superior, the largest and cleanest of all Great Lakes. For every 2,000 pounds mined, 1,970 would be toxic waste, to be stored on-site in a facility visible from the region's most famous scenic overlooks, and only 30 pounds would be copper, **to be shipped to Canada with no guarantee of return to the United States, let alone Michigan, with potential tariffs imposed on any imports.**

Copperwood Mine conflates private industrial benefit with community benefit.

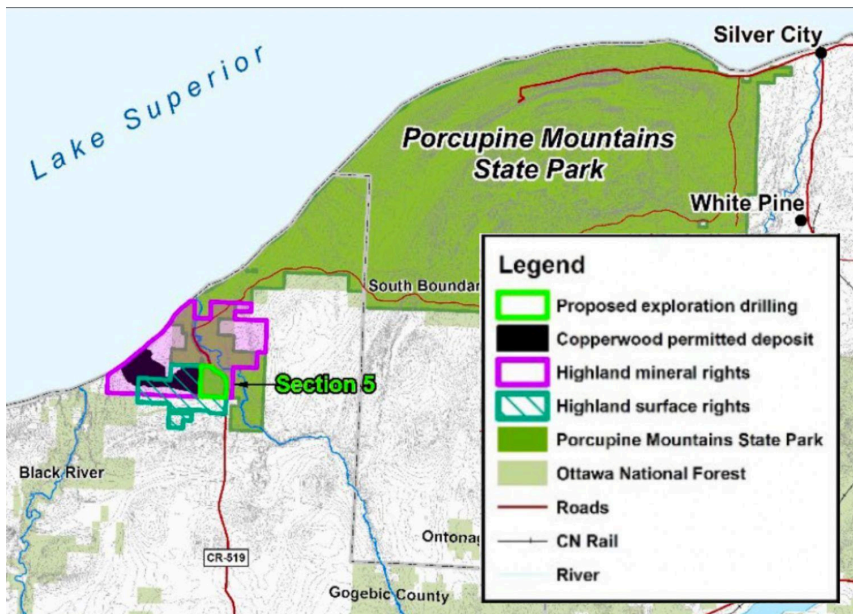
The infrastructure this grant/budget addition would pay for serves to directly benefit the foreign mining company and industrial interests, ***not a local community***. County Road 519 is already a year-round road, plowed after every snowfall, ensuring year-round access to the State Park. However, ***there are zero year-round residents of the northern portion of Wakefield Township***, and thus **no community need for high voltage transmission lines, cell towers, or heavy industrial roads.**

Jobs: Some local authorities support the mine because they believe it will bring jobs. However, the grant text specifies that many of the projected 380 jobs (up from 250 projected just a few years ago) would go to **specialized non-residents**, with plans to transfer employees from the closing Eagle Mine to fill open positions. Most local residents will not be eligible for specialized positions at the mine, which would **only operate for 10.7 years**. We must also ask: if short-term mining operations bring long-term prosperity, then why have historic mining communities in Gogebic and Ontonagon Counties experienced such economic hardship and population decline?

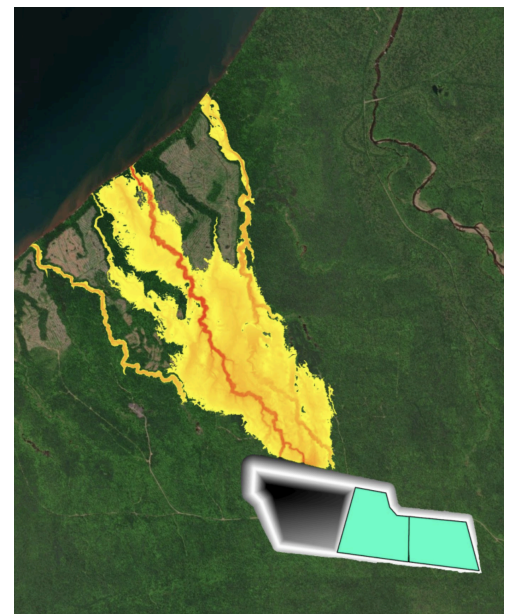
Highland Copper is a foreign company with ZERO mining experience.

Highland Copper is a junior mining company which has *never developed a mine*. In 2023, they sold 66% of their shares of their proposed White Pine North mine (on the other side of the Porkies) to a larger Canadian company and thus became a minority shareholder. It is reasonable to assume that their plans for Copperwood are the same: scoring a Michigan grant would be very useful in attracting buyers for what is otherwise an unpopular and unprofitable project. *Is the proper role of taxpayer dollars to help a foreign extractive company secure a better deal?*

Highland Copper plans to mine as close as 100 feet from Lake Superior, as well as adjacent to and underneath Porcupine Mountains State Park. They plan to mine for the copper in a hard rock ore body, which exposes toxic metals such as mercury and arsenic to nearby watersheds and Lake Superior. There has *never* been a sulfide mine that has not polluted nearby water sources. Over its proposed 10.7 years of operation, Copperwood will produce over 30 million tons of waste, containing toxic metals and chemicals. Its proposed waste storage facility is a 323-acre tailings “pond,” less than 2 miles from Lake Superior. **The pond is designed to withstand only 1-in-100-year storm events, despite the occurrence of two 1-in-1,000-year storm events in the last decade.** The Association of State Dam Safety Officials described Michigan’s Dam Safety Program as “extremely understaffed to perform the mission of dam safety.” **We must take seriously the possibility of a waste dam rupture in unprecedented proximity to Lake Superior. When the dam breaks, the waste will barrel towards Lake Superior, reaching the Lake in as few as 21 minutes and causing irreparable ecosystem harm.**¹



Copperwood Mine Location.



Copperwood Dam Rupture Model, 2024
Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission

Research shows that negative economic harms will outweigh any short-term benefits.

The most comprehensive study ever conducted on the influence of mining on rural economies found that **almost half of all outcomes were negative**. Mining led to positive long-term results in only 29% of cases, and most of those were from before 1982.² More recent research shows that economic harm is especially pronounced in areas dependent on outdoor recreation. Harvard Economics Professor James Stock, former economic advisor to President Obama, summarizes: **"In 89% of cases, copper mining leads to a negative for jobs and a negative for incomes."**³

Check our sources and learn more by scanning this QR code:



¹Preliminary Dam Breach Inundation Analysis for the Copperwood Project. Scott Cardiff et. al. 2024.

²Analysis of proposed 20-year mineral leasing withdrawal in Superior National Forest. James Stock. 2020.

³Mining the Data: Analyzing the Economic Implications of Mining for Nonmetropolitan Regions. William R. Freudenburg, University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2002.