

**Testimony of Representative Bill Bridgeo
Before the Land Use Planning Commission
In Opposition to the Wolfden Pickett Mountain Rezoning Request**

Chairman Worcester and Members of the Land Use Planning Commission,

My name is Bill Bridgeo. I live in Augusta and I represent District 60 (Augusta's East Side) in the Maine House.

I retired two years ago after a forty-three year career in city management – the last twenty-four in Augusta. I appreciate, perhaps more than most, the often thankless and certainly difficult job of a municipal or state planning commission member and I thank you for your service to the people of this great state.

I was born in Houlton and raised in Caribou into high school when my parents rudely moved my five younger brothers and me to Massachusetts – exiting the County like so many families in those days in search of expanded economic opportunity.

I got back to Maine (as quick as I could, as they say) in 1979 to accept my first city manager's job in Calais, where I met my wonderful wife of the past thirty-nine years and we began our family.

In 1998, after a stint managing a community in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, we returned home to Maine and I began my service in Augusta. That year, my son was twelve and a promising hockey player. A fellow hockey dad and I became friends and one afternoon he asked me if I liked to fish. Eric is another County boy from the Houlton area who owns an old log cabin originally built by loggers many years ago. When I expressed enthusiasm, he invited me to join he and his long-time hunting and fishing companions on their annual spring trout fishing trip to Mud Lake.

That excursion, so akin to the ones I enjoyed as a boy – growing up with a love of the outdoors and easy proximity to the woods and waters of the Aroostook, the St. John and the Allagash – was soul-restoring and I've returned to Mud Lake at least annually ever since.

I can attest to you, from first-hand experience, that the cursory, minimizing reference that Wolfden makes in the third paragraph of page 297 of its voluminous rezoning application to the nature of the trout and land-locked salmon fishery centered at Mud Lake (as part of the Pleasant Lake and Mud Lake flowage into the headwaters of the West Branch of the Mattawamkeag River) is a gross understatement of the reality of the natural treasure I know exists there.

I will leave it to others with far more expertise than me to explain the risks to surface and groundwater that a mining enterprise as proposed here presents. My purpose tonight is to be sure you hear the truth about the special, pristine and increasingly scarce in the Northeast, resource that sits just below the proposed project.

Some years ago, as a veteran of the monumental project to remove the Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River in Augusta, I participated in a symposium and panel discussions in Missoula, Montana on the challenges posed in trying to clean up the Clark Fork River after years of nearby heavy metal mining had poisoned it. It was a vivid education for me on the incongruity of heavy metal extraction and resource protection.

A mine, if zoned for and permitted by DEP, will come and then eventually go. It's economic benefits to the area may or may not materialize as promised. Environmental damage, unintentional as it may be, will be irreversible – at least to the extent that a fragile fishery has been impacted.

With your copy of this testimony, I've appended a few photographs of some of my trips to Mud Lake. (I assure any wardens in the room that all of the catches conformed to IF&W's daily bag limits.) In one, taken from the old camp you can see where Pickett Mountain Stream flows into Mud Lake. In a second one, taken from a newer campsite Eric acquired for his two sons (who've been coming to the lake since they were babies) and their young ones, you can appreciate the proximity of Pickett Mountain to the water.

As the pictures illustrate, what exists on Mud Lake is a primitive, backwoods vestige of Maine's ageless fishing and hunting traditions. It has survived and co-habitated with generations of logging and traditional sporting activities. It needs protection going forward.

Thank you for listening. I'm happy to answer any questions.

①

MUD LAKE VIEW FROM THE OLD CAMP (W. N.W.S. IN THE DISTANCE)



③ MAY 2019 CATCH (LATE 4 13/00K)



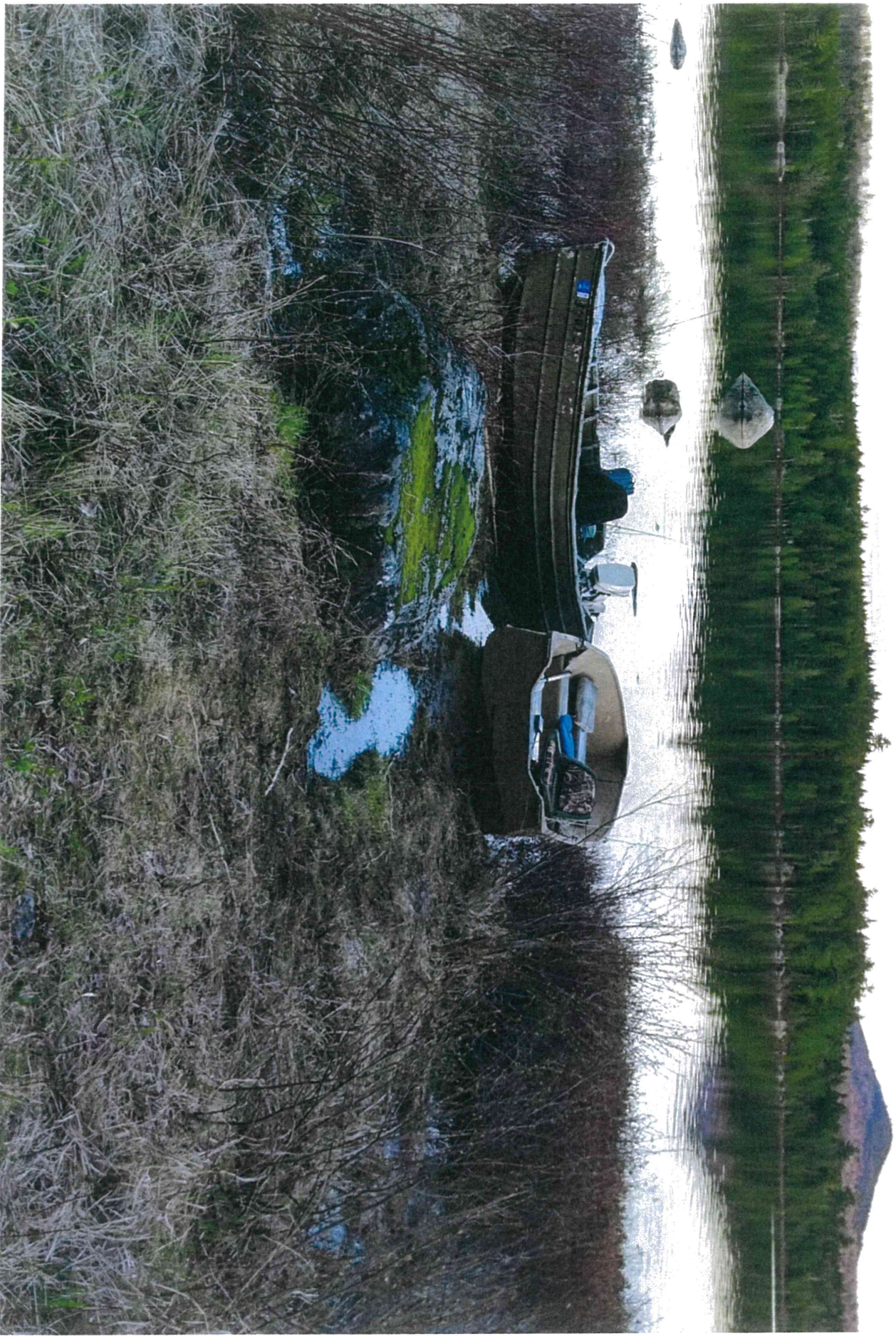
⑧ May 2018 - Three Generations AT Ride - Dad, Mom, Eric, Christy & Nolan



2018



Wmwy 2017 - Mud Lake View From Dead Creek w/ Pickett Mt. in the distance



2015



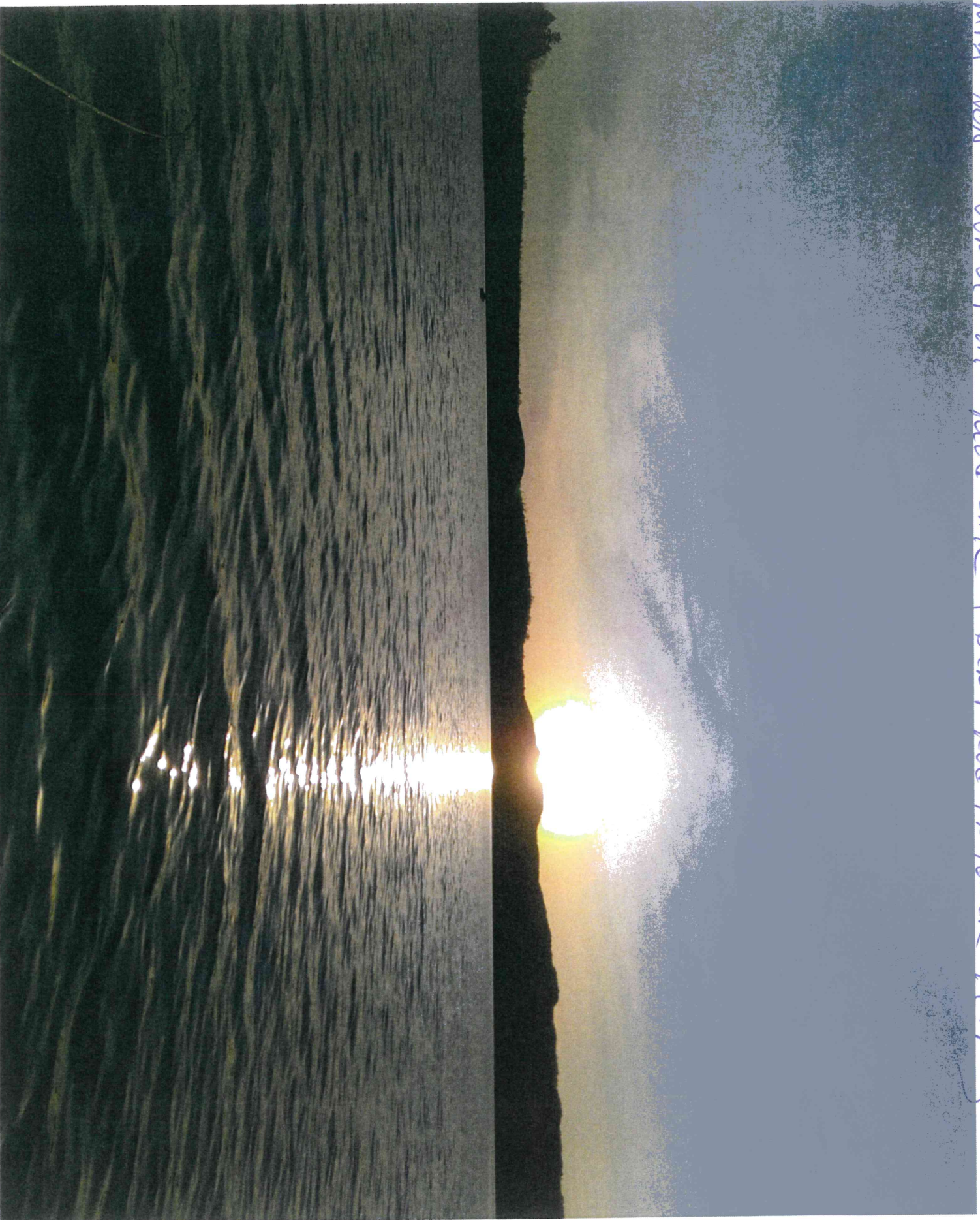
YEAR 2015

2011.



10

WINDY BOAT - SUNSET AT MUD CRATE | BEST ROD IN HOUSE LEFT!



BEST ROD CRATE LEFT! 2018

Wolfden Resources Pickett Mountain Rezoning Public Hearing

October 17, 2023

My name is Rebecca Phillips, CPA, Ms. I have worked as a CPA in audit, taxation and governmental for many years. I have worked in many industries. I have audited industries such as Towns and Cities. I was an auditor, a Medicare auditor, a compliance officer, finance director, grant manager, grant writer and a Town Manager for a small town.

I am a resident of Patten and I love this area. I have lived in Portland, Patten, Augusta and Lubec. This is a great state.

I have a few statistics from the census bureau:

2021 population for Patten was 888. We are a declining population due to lack of jobs.

Median Income in 2021 was \$37,292.

Median age was 56 years old.

24% of Patten's population is living in poverty.

I worked for some of the companies that oppose this mining project. I would like to remind the LUPC that some of the opponents are heavily subsidized by grants and funding from the federal government. The people living near the mining project are not subsidized by grants or federal funds and we desperately need this mining project.

I would like to mention that the Monument stated that they will not stand in the way of other community development. Also, the Monument continues to develop infrastructure within the monument area and along the river.

I am disappointed that people are trying to stop this Wolfden Project before they have an opportunity to do their due diligence with research and development and many other compliance requirements as well. Why are the opponents afraid to trust the people who wrote the toughest mining law in the country, DEP and LUPC. I have confidence in these agencies to oversee this project for compliance requirements.

This is a great State and all parties in this State need to work together to ensure that we can live quality lives, overcome poverty and oppression.

I urge the LUPC to approve the Wolfden Resources Pickett Mountain Rezoning.

Rebecca Phillips, CPA, MS

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Good evening, Chairman, members of the Committee and Director Beyer. My name is MaryAlice Mowry, and I am a resident of Patten, Maine, I think of myself as a “new local”. I Thank you for your service and commitment to the mission of the LUPC. Since early 2022 I have witnessed the campaign that Wolfden Resources has waged on the northern communities of the Katahdin Region and have come to believe that this is latest outside company to come in and promise the world only to leave the people and the region even more empty handed and disillusioned by the unfulfilled promises to bring back “the good old days”.

Not every “local” I know who is opposed to this mine could come to speak, they are out there, and some feel that it is risky for them to be public in their opposition. Many people in our state have close ties to the region, close to 80% of Mt. Chase taxpayers do not live here full time. The people who opposed Wolfden are not all “those people from Portland” this mining project is important to the entire state. Other communities have stood up against Wolfden, like Pembroke in Down East. And yet it is here that the Wolfden mining project has reopened old wounds regarding the land that is now Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, wounds that were beginning to heal have been ripped open. It is a false equivalency to assert “if Rozanne Quimby can buy land and give it to the National Park Service then Wolfden should be able to build a mine”. I have watched the divisions grow and deepen in our region around the mine. There has been little willingness to engage in true public debate about this project instead Wolfden approached elected officials promising future resources and creating an atmosphere like a “bidding war” for who would be first the first municipality to say yes to mining facilities in their town. Wolfden asked local people to decide to vote before any action with regulators had taken place. They seldom mentioned that their first application for rezoning was withdrawn after the LUPC staff informed them that the staff recommendation would be to deny the application.

So now Wolfden has in their back pocket a number of municipalities who have voted on an unenforceable resolution to support them. Good for attracting more investors and bolstering their unequivocal claim of local support. The local support is not unequivocal. It has been hard to be opposed, I have strived to be respectful of our differences, I want economic prosperity, I value the vibrancy of young people, I dream of a thriving community of both generations who settled here and those who are saying yes to a new beginning by moving to this beautiful region. I don't believe that this project helps to fulfill any of this vision.

The State Legislature entrusted the LUPC to facilitate a robust and necessary planning, zoning and development process to the unorganized and deorganized areas of the State. The legislature did not want a "check off the box" process, but envisioned a deeply interactive process that protects the natural resources and the people of this state. Preserve, Support, Encourage, Honor, Prevent (3), Discourage, are the actions toward this mission - not test, assume, pass-along. If the legislature did not believe that an LUPC was an important part of the overall regulatory process to review projects that would or might go to the DEP, they would have legislated that, they did not. As a former state "planner" and someone deeply committed to the future of this region I feel that there are too many unanswered questions and stated promises without enough real evidence and plans to allow for appropriate decision making and stewardship by the LUPC staff and commission. My own list of unanswered questions is at times overwhelming and a burden to shoulder, but they are real. 1. How can there be a decision when we don't know where the tailings will be processed? 2. Where has there really been economic gain in mining communities? What makes it so certain it can happen here? 3. What about training: how, what, who and where is a plan? Do the promises seem to align with current composition of the workforce of the mining industry of today? 4. What about the trucks, the smelting, the

concentrator, the traffic routes, the hazardous waste? the unintended consequences? How are risks impacted by a proposal that is filled with so many components that have never been done by this company or in some cases any company before, doesn't that mean exponential risk? 7.

What about the water, our precious, precious water?

In closing, I would ask that you deny this application. Safer more reliable economic opportunities will emerge. The wounds will heal. The region will go forward.

Good evening Commissioners,
Welcome to the Katahdin Region

My name is Susan Adams and I live up in Patten . I am also the current President of Maine Lakes, a non-profit statewide organization that's a voice for the protection of our most precious freshwater resources and wildlife habitat .

For millennia, the Wabanaki people have been a part of this land I currently reside on. This land has nourished, healed, protected and embraced them for many generations in a relationship of balance and harmony. As a member of the Katahdin Region community I acknowledge this legacy. I support and promote the continuation of this balance and harmony. I find great inspiration from this land; the land of the Wabanaki.

I'm here tonight in opposition to Wolfden Resource's proposed mine and I respectfully ask that you reject their rezoning request.

I grew up by the lower Penobscot River at a time when the industrial pollution was at its peak and our clam flats were closed and the fear that we would lose the beauty and appeal of our place was real. Industry often won out over common sense and protection of our natural resources way back then .

I attended Bangor High School and hold a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maine in environmental studies. My career has centered on Outdoor Recreation Management, primarily within the incredible natural resources of the Katahdin region .

For 30 years, I co-owned and operated a whitewater photography business focused on the West Branch of the Penobscot River .

I am currently involved in a variety of local organizations and advisory boards ,including the areas of academics and tourism. I made it a personal quest to get the dark sky designation for the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument lands.

In the last 10 plus years I have seen a huge growth in outdoor recreation and a resurgence in eco-tourism in this region.

The recent Katahdin Woods and Waters National Scenic By Way designation was based on the primary intrinsic value of outdoor recreation, encouraging "new locals" seeking a healthier place to live and raise their families to move here for these opportunities and the vibrant natural resources that go hand in hand .

My son and future daughter in law are two of those who have migrated away from the over crowded west , back to the rural Northwoods region , because of their love of Maine's natural resources and the outdoor recreational opportunities afforded here.

You can gather that I'm devoted to my home state of Maine and that I highly value the land, water, dark skies and wildlife we're fortunate to have here. I'm heavily invested in the Katahdin

region and the long-term wellbeing of our natural and recreational resources, as well as the local businesses.

During covid my son and I made the trek into Mud Lake and Pleasant Lake close to the proposed rezoning area and were overwhelmed with the natural beauty and pristine waters. If you have not made the effort and are able ,I would highly recommend it. Those great ponds belong to each one of us as residents of the State of Maine and are thus our responsibility to protect as well.

Wolfden's proposal is a threat to our clean water, aquatic habitat, dark skies, and the outdoor economy as well as our way of life here in the region. I live less than 5 miles distance from the site. I do not support building a mine that would benefit only a handful of people while jeopardizing the very elements that make Maine special, especially not in the Katahdin region so close to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and our beloved Baxter State Park .

Not only am I concerned about the environmental and recreational impacts of the proposed mine, Wolfden has not provided a preponderance of evidence that they can safely operate a mine.

They have not provided information about the location of their ore processing facility or adequately demonstrated that their water filtration system will protect the Penobscot River watershed.

Please reject Wolfden's rezoning request. Thank you so much for your time.

Susan Adams
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Good evening. Chairman Worcester, Counselor Elwell, and distinguished members of the Land Use Planning Commission. My name is Peter Lyford. I live in Eddington, and I represent roughly 35,000 Mainers in Penobscot and Hancock County in the Maine State Senate.

I'm also very familiar with the project area, as I'm the ~~Chairman~~ Chairman of Land Management for the Katahdin Charities, which is the local affiliate of Boy Scouts of America. In that capacity, I've been involved with land owned by the Boy Scouts not too far from the proposed project site on the back side of Grand Lake Mattagamon. They do a number of canoe trips to explore the area every year. Scouts all over the country

I've sat with representatives from Wolfden Resources multiple times and I am interested in seeing this project move on to the next phase. I was in the Maine House of Representatives when LD 820 passed with strong support from the environmental advocacy groups, and believe that Chapter 200 includes more than adequate protections for our natural resources. 12-1 Vote in Comm

As an elected official, I can appreciate that this commission feels a responsibility not to punt this issue to the DEP. However, as a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources I've worked closely with Commissioner Loyzim and her team on a range of issues, to include mining, and I'm confident ~~you~~ that your approval of this rezone would be simply the start of a long, rigorous process for the applicant.

I'm interested to learn if a Maine mining market is possible under Chapter 200 and hope that you are willing to allow Wolfden Resources to be the first to test these stringent rules under Chapter 200. We've allowed child laborers in China and other developing nations to mine the rare Earth materials necessary for our modern electronics for far too long, with very little protections for human rights or the environment.

Our state moto is "Dirigo" which as you all certainly know means "I Lead." I feel strongly that it is time for Maine to lead the way on responsible mining projects and therefore respectfully ask that you consider approving this petition for rezoning.

Thank you.

LD-1363

Alewry

12-1 Vote in Comm
Natural Resource Council
of Maine on Board.



A view of Pickett Mountain and Pickett Mountain Pond, which could serve as the site of a new minerals mine by Canadian mining company Wolfden Resources. Credit: Courtesy of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission

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A project in Maine currently at the permitting/public comment phase opens a larger discussion around our country's scarce mineral resources. The **Picket Mountain Project**, just north of Patten in Penobscot County, is a mining project proposed by Wolfden Resources Corporation that will mine and process one of the highest grade undeveloped polymetallic massive sulfide deposits in North America.

The deposit includes the rare earth elements of zinc, copper, lead, silver and gold, all of which have critical uses in manufacturing. For zinc, uses extend into the nutritional and pharmaceutical sectors and even batteries along with lead and copper.

Another element important to the battery industry is lithium, which is used in the lithium-ion batteries that power electric vehicles. It was also discovered in Maine in perhaps the world's

largest deposit of spodumene ore in Newry, which drew **national attention** when state regulators refused to allow its mining.

The discussion we need to have centers on the fact that our nation is far too dependent upon China and other countries for such raw materials and rare minerals. We've **known for years** that the U.S. is at risk to the worsening ramifications of supply disruptions, scarcity and even geopolitical turmoil with countries like China and Russia. The pandemic showed just how much.

If we are going to be a leader in the manufacturing of electric vehicles, electronics, microchips and, yes, even solar panels, it has to begin with ourselves. We can start to reduce our risk through self reliance right here in Maine.

Sen. Peter Lyford

Eddington

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