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June 6, 2018

Via E-mail zoning@co.oneida.wi.us
Oneida County Planning & Development Committee
PO Box 400
Rhineland WI 54501

Re: Public Comments on the Proposed Mining Ordinance

Dear Committee Members,

Wisconsin Infrastructure Investment Now, Inc. (WIIN) is a nonprofit organization, and its mission is to educate the public, elected officials and regulators on the societal and economic benefits of the responsible investment in, and expansion of, transportation facilities, renewable and traditional energy projects, mining and other infrastructure projects. WIIN thanks the Committee for the opportunity to comment on a zoning ordinance regulating metallic mining in Oneida County.

The recently-enacted state legislation created a framework to allow for tremendous economic growth. A typical mine could create 300+ family-sustaining jobs in the local community. The Flambeau mine, for example, utilized local people for 85% of its workforce. Taxes and fees to local and state governments from a single mine would be over \$27 million. These numbers don't take into account the indirect economic development that would result from a new facility, including businesses needed to support project operations, housing development, and even increased spending at local restaurants and other establishments.

Furthermore, local sourcing of resources means local control over workplace safety and environmental standards. For example, according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative, the United States imported \$1.7 billion in copper from Chile in 2016. See <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/americas/chile>. The workforce safety and environmental standards utilized in Chile are less stringent than Wisconsin's standards, although Chile continues to develop and improve its environmental regulations. Additionally, the transportation costs (financial and environmental) are largely avoided if resources are sourced locally.

Despite rhetoric and fear-inducing hyperbole, mining can be safely and cleanly developed in Wisconsin, particularly in light of recent technological advances in the industry. It is imperative that, as the mining industry is renewed in Wisconsin, regulators take balanced, unbiased and responsible approaches to industry analyses and site-specific projects. The draft ordinance misses this mark in several key respects.

First, the ordinance creates what can only be called a conditional use process that lacks defined, reasonable standards. Recent changes to conditional use permits, 2017 Wis. Act 67, prohibit imposition of such unreasonable or subjective requirements. Secondly, the draft contains mandatory land de-valuation payments and road trust payments that appear wholly unconnected to any reasonable calculation of property value loss or road damage. WIIN believes that such provisions far exceed the scope of zoning authority. WIIN encourages the Committee to review the proposed Forest County mining ordinance, which recently passed out of the Land & Water Resources Zoning Committee. Forest County's proposed ordinance utilizes a local agreement process that is more consistent with the statutory requirements for nonmetallic mining.

Again, WIIN appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed mining ordinance. We look forward to working with County officials as the ordinance process progresses.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tom Schaitel

Tom Schaitel
WIIN Board Member and Secretary