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Rebecca L. Harvey, Branch Chief
UIC Branch (WU- 16J)
U.S. EPA
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Chief Harvey and Mr. Steven Roy of the Underground Injection Control Department,

As a citizen I am deeply concerned about Rio Tinto's proposed nickel and copper mine in northern Marquette County, Michigan, and the environmental impact the mine and related operations will have on the surrounding region. The citizens of Marquette County have witnessed Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company (a Rio Tinto subsidiary) take desperate and extreme measures in an attempt to begin the Eagle Mine project on 120 acres of public land. As an example, in a letter dated March 22, 2010, Rio Tinto's Eagle Project manager, Jon Cherry, notified the Michigan DNRE that the company has determined that it doesn't need permits from the United States Environmental Protection Agency for wastewater injection at the proposed Eagle Mine. According to Kennecott's surface use lease with the State of Michigan, the company needs all permits in place before using the site. As of today, they do not have the federal permits, and the bulldozing and other activity at the proposed mine site is illegal.

Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company (working under the name Woodland Road LLC) proposed to build a 22 mile road through a wilderness area in Marquette County. The road connects the proposed mine site with mill operations and potential tailings disposal sites. The proposed project area covers over 184,000 acres of land including 23 stream crossings and would directly impact over 27 acres of wetlands. The project area contains bogs, bog lakes, and wet meadows; all areas would be subjected to pollution from vehicles, road maintenance, and runoff. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Army Corps of Engineers this project does not follow federal water protection laws. The construction of this road and the inevitable contamination that will result from its use will damage the fragile wilderness areas of northern Marquette County beyond repair.

Given the environmental devastation that will likely result from the proposed nickel and copper mine, I urge the United States Environmental Protection Agency to deny the Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company the wastewater injection permit. The citizens living in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, along with a growing number of citizens from neighboring , stand behind this request.

Sincerely,

Emily Sprengelmeyer