

Information about LD 395 and LD 820

Here are the biggest problems with LD 395 (BEP's weak mining rules) and what LD 820 does to address these issues. **LD 395 would:**

- **Allow mining in, on, and under Maine's spectacular public reserved lands such as Deboullie, Nahmakanta, and Telos.** *LD 820 would ban mining on all state-owned lands.*
- **Leave Maine taxpayers on the hook for mining disasters, which happen far too often.** Maine should not allow mining by any company that isn't willing to pay upfront for the cost of a potential disaster. Mining disasters frequently cost hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up, and companies often go bankrupt, leaving taxpayers with the bill. Maine taxpayers are still paying to clean up the Callahan mine in Brooksville, which closed in 1972. The cleanup is nowhere near complete, and the site is still contaminating the surrounding waters and fish. Maine cannot afford this kind of problem again.

LD 820 would require a qualified third party to estimate the cost of a worst-case mining disaster. It would also require mining companies to put that amount of money into a trust that the State can access in case of a disaster. This will ensure mining companies pay to clean up their messes, not Maine taxpayers.

- **Allow even the most hazardous parts of mines—such as waste rock piles, mine pits, and processing facilities—in floodplains and flood hazard areas.** Mining is one of the most dangerous industrial activities. Allowing mines in areas vulnerable to flooding only increases the dangers of mining, and it makes no sense. *LD 820 would ban this.*
- **Allow “wet mine units” to store acid-generating mining waste.** The 2017 rules do not clearly define “wet mine waste units,” but they put no limit on their size. DEP has admitted “wet mine waste units” would be similar to tailings impoundments. Tailings impoundments are extremely dangerous. Maine should not allow them or anything like them. Eighty percent of tailings impoundment dam failures occur during the active life of mines, not in some distant future. Tailings dam failures also happen at modern mines, such as the [Mount Polley mine](#) in British Columbia. *LD 820 does not address this issue, but NRCM will push for new rules to require only dry mining waste management and ban tailings impoundments and “wet mine waste units.”*
- **Allow open-pit mines.** Open-pit mines generate about ten times more waste than underground mines and are a particularly bad idea in a wet state like Maine. *LD 820 does not address this issue, but NRCM will push for a ban on open-pit mines in new mining rules.*

