



November 12, 2020

Re: Opposition to ZP 779

Dear Ms. Beyer,

On behalf of over 90 registered Maine guides, sporting camp and lodge owners, and their supporters, we are writing to express our opposition to LUPC Zoning Petition (ZP) 779 – Wolfden Mt. Chase, LLC's (Wolfden) rezoning request to allow a metallic mineral mine near Mount Chase and respectfully request that you deny the rezoning petition. The mission of the Maine Wilderness Guides Organization (MWGO) is to provide a unified voice for the profession of wilderness guiding while maintaining the highest professional, educational, and stewardship standards for the conservation of remote woods and waters. We are dedicated to the protection of habitat and natural resources in the areas we guide in for our livelihoods, our clients, the fish and game we pursue, and for future generations.

First and foremost, Wolfden's proposed mine is a threat to our businesses and the natural resources upon which we depend. Because of our focus on healthy habitat, abundant fish and wildlife populations, and access to wild areas, we are deeply concerned about the potential environmental, economic, and social impacts Wolfden's proposed mine would have. We are concerned that the project will cause significant ecological harm to the forests and waterways that our members use for guiding. We are heavily reliant upon undeveloped, scenic, quiet natural habitats and wildlife encounters that distinguish Maine's North Woods and attract customers to keep our businesses alive. The proposed mine would degrade the quality and character of the places we have counted on for decades to take clients and would negatively affect numerous recreational opportunities in the area.

Specifically, the site of the proposed mine is upstream from the West Branch Mattawamkeag River, which flows into the Mattawamkeag River and eventually the Penobscot River. Guides use the rivers in this watershed frequently, including in the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Notably, these rivers are habitat for native brook trout, landlocked salmon, and federally endangered sea-run Atlantic salmon, thanks to a multi-year dam removal effort and newly restored fish access. Runoff from the mine would drain to these waterways that are important to guiding businesses as well as native fish and could cause undue harm if the wastewater is insufficiently treated. Without businesses like guides, lodges, and sporting camps, there would be fewer reasons for tourists to recreate and stay overnight in Maine's North Woods, cutting off vital economic activity to a region with few other robust, longstanding industries or job opportunities.

Furthermore, Wolfden has not demonstrated that it has the financial resources or technical capacity to safely construct and operate its proposed mine, nor has the company demonstrated complete understanding of Maine's mining laws. Mining is a highly technical business and can be dangerous, requiring a lot of capital and expertise that Wolfden has not proven it has. Small errors can result in water pollution, creating toxic conditions for fish, wildlife, and people. For example, highly acidic water coming off a mine site could deplete the condition of waterways and kill off fish, wildlife, and other

organisms. Mines continue to do this for decades after they are closed, and there have been many instances where the company that made the profit does not have the resources to address the pollution. In fact, Wolfden is claiming without detailed evidence that they will be able to discharge used and treated wastewater to groundwater without negative impacts, yet they have failed to provide an example of another mine that does this. Maine taxpayers are still paying to clean up the Callahan Mine in Brooksville, which closed in 1972. Maine cannot afford another disaster like this, especially not in such a sensitive region of the state near outstanding wild brook trout resources and so close to valuable recreational areas like upper and lower Shin Pond, Baxter State Park, and the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the LUPC deny ZP 779. Guiding is more than just a job for MWGO members; it is a way of life that has become part of Maine's culture that the proposed Wolfden mine could jeopardize. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeanne Christie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J".

Jeanne Christie, President
Board of Directors