

**Social, Economic, and Labor Opportunities  
Subcommittee for Michigan's Mining Future  
Minutes**

**October 12, 2020 – 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

**Roll Call**

Chad Korpi – present  
Matt Johnson – present  
Jason Rivard – present (for Richard Becker)  
Evelyn Ravindran – present  
Adam Wygant – present  
Amanda Bright-McClanahan – present  
Dana Dumont – present

The meeting began at 1:05 p.m. with roll call.

We had eight bullet points for our committee to review:

1. Assemble and disseminate information on the economic and social impact of all types of mining (extractive industries) in the state
2. Community Education
3. Energetic and bright workforces, including students, researchers, and faculty members, to solve diverse mining-related problems
4. Due to the cyclical nature of mining, improve the Unemployment Benefit amount and Benefit duration for laid-off miners.
5. Increase enrollment in mining-related programs, due to limited in-state job opportunity
6. Achieving and maintaining the public's trust and support of the committee
7. Make the public aware of its heavy dependency on mineral resources and the important role, and social obligation, that Michigan can play in supplying some of these .
8. Addressing public misconceptions about mining.

It was decided that numbers 2, 7, and 8 should be combined as one item, and the rest would remain as separate items.

MEDC doesn't do regulatory functioning. There is a connection between different industries in partnership strategy. We learned that any difference in education materials to public needs to be language. Messaging will be lost if you create a division. The end goal is to get the public to understand and be careful with separation.

Is it the role of the State to promote the mineral industry? It is. How can we be thinking of how the state supports regional partners? MEDC could be there 100% to provide connection point. Regional differentiation will be important especially with gravel and stone operations as opposed to iron ore and nickel mining.

We have to be careful to talk about our strengths for regulation. We have a role with all extractions. We have to not cross over and make it personal. We need to partner with MEDC or other.

The DNR rule is to not promote it. We have lease auctions and want royalties but aren't in a position to do this. It would be cool to see a map of minerals statewide. We should include this in our final report.

EGLE has to be thoughtful about website design and be informative. We have a nice video called *The Day in the Life of Minerals* which shows how we use minerals every day. There is a document that shows there are over 70 minerals that go into making a cell phone. This would be a great example to show the public to educate them.

There are 81 out of 83 counties that have limestone, sand and gravel. It is important that we source these minerals locally. Gypsum mine contributes to everyday life. At Aggregate Associates, they put together boxes of rocks to distribute at schools and anyone else to educate them. If we have minerals to be developed in an economic way, we do things pretty well.

We have to be responsible when mining. There is a brand distinction for doing sustainable mining practice. Can Michigan promote this and recognize companies that do? Right now, there is no sticker given for being a good manager.

We need incentive money for small to medium businesses to look at: training, taking care of workers, and livable wages. This is a great opportunity for the State to partner with companies. The State of Michigan could be a leader but there is lots of work to do. No mine is forever sustainable. Gravel is a great example. Mining alters land and it's not easily reclaimed. When mining is done, the land should be left at its best for future generations.

Skilled trades are important, too. Sustainability is the most important aspect. Around the tenth year of mining is when problems arise. Eagle will see more short term mining; 100% of underground workforce is out of state and now are 50% are from the UP. Where do they go afterwards? How does their skill set qualify them for another job?

There is a need for transferrable credentials, and it will be paramount in industry development. The state can help with this partnership. High school students can participate. They can go to school for free and graduate with a skilled trade or partner with an apprentice program. There is no money for programs to have employees help train kids. We need to look for an opportunity to sustain and grow skilled trades in

Michigan. We could collaborate with the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

The trend of the life of a mine is shorter. Is reclamation being considered when the mine is shorter? The life of the mine does not include reclamation. It includes building sustainability.

What happens with the land when the mine is done? Is there a lot of communities with companies in the UP with timetables with a skill set for the UP and know the timetable of skills needed? Communication needs to happen.

Research and mapping used to put resources together for different universities. There should be companies people could contact for this information. If someone goes from one mine to another, an employee may lose seniority in a union – it happened at Eagle Mine one time. There is a loss of education centers across the state. One was just built between Marquette and Negaunee. We need to look at skilled trade centers in Michigan and promote opportunities.

How are we helping employees today to be more transferrable in the future? Miners stick around as long as they could. Most miners moved to Minnesota. The ones that went to Minnesota said the range was like the UP. Some moved back; some stayed there and moved their families with them. Mining opportunities in Minnesota are much greater in Minnesota especially in the ore range.

When economies get depressed, metal prices go up. China is controlling minerals right now. We need to pull things together if companies are eyeballing Michigan. We need to look way ahead in the future and pressures in Michigan. The pandemic has accelerated some of these pressures. There is a separate standard for workers with uninterrupted benefit time. Some paid into a different pool to provide better benefits.

Industries in the state of UI benefits need to look at how specialized this workforce is. Empire Mine idled. Eagle Mine could keep moving. There is no lack of peridot. The group needs to bring more awareness to light. Diversity skill set needs to mirror the TA program but not duplicate it.

We need to increase enrollment. Michigan Tech reinstated their mining program. Maybe they could add a junior program at Gogebic College if they don't have one already. In the UP, they have a middle college program. The coordinator works with students by helping with classes and making sure they stay in the program. They try to maintain this at the college. Eagle paid to keep the coordinator position but will need more sustainable funding.

Trust in the committee matters; we need to make sure the public pieces involve the correct stakeholders. This is what you strive for. Any opportunity for people to comment builds trust. Diversity of committee members and ad hoc members make a

difference as well. If the report reflects diversity of the report, it matters. The committee may make some interesting recommendations, but it's okay.

We need to expand the miner list to include people that use land before it's mined and after the life of the mine as well. How do we pick one user group over another? What does it look like for another user group? There is an influx of commercial/residential in norther Michigan and the UP in remote work areas. Landscape will change due to economic drift, and land use policy will become important.

Mining transcends zoning; it doesn't need a zoning change as mineral rights to property. Someone can disturb surface to get to the minerals. Does the surface have the ability to stop it? People camp on iron heaps, and companies can explore without permission. Eagle Mine does not allow this. Some people have environmental ethics that their land isn't available at any price.

Matt will report to the full committee on October 13, 2020.

There was no public comments as no one from the public attended the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.