



Resolution 26-2 GLLC Action on Sulfide-Ore Copper Mining

- WHEREAS,** the Great Lakes hold one fifth of the world's freshwater; and
- WHEREAS,** sulfide-ore copper mining is a type of hard rock mining, which is taking place around the Great Lakes, including on the shores of Lake Superior in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Ontarioⁱ; and
- WHEREAS,** the process that this mining technique uses can harm the environment and people and species that call the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Rivier basin homeⁱⁱ ; and
- WHEREAS,** in order to access copper, mining facilities process the ore bodies where the copper is housed, and throughout this process, these ores can transform into Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials (TENORM)ⁱⁱⁱ; and
- WHEREAS,** in addition to TENORMs, sulfide-ore copper mining can pollute the land, air and water with toxic materials such as sulfates, lead, mercury and more during the mining, processing, and storage lifecycle^{ivv}; and
- WHEREAS,** this type of mining can release these toxins into the air and water where the mining takes place and where these chemicals are disposed of off-site as well^{vi}; and
- WHEREAS,** TENORMs and the other toxic materials that are produced as a byproduct of this mining can lead to higher risks cancer, kidney damage, bone loss and more^{vii}^{viii} ; and
- WHEREAS,** contaminated stamp sands from copper mines that ceased operations in the 1930s are impacting the ability of lake trout and whitefish to spawn near Michigan's Buffalo Reef, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED,** that the GLLC recognizes the negative impacts that sulfide-ore copper mining can have on the health of the Great Lakes, the species that live in them, and the people that rely on them; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that this resolution be submitted to the appropriate state, provincial, and federal officials.

Approved at the 2026 Annual Meeting on September 29, 2026

ⁱ Biological Diversity, [Public Lands Mining](#)

ⁱⁱNational Wildlife Federation, [Sulfide Mining Regulation in the Great Lakes Region](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, [Copper Mining and Production Wastes](#)

^{iv} Sierra Club, [Metallic Sulfide Mining](#)

^v National Library of Medicine, [Are we underestimating exposures from NORM dust?](#)

^{vi} U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, [Toxics Release Inventory](#)

^{vii} Sierra Club, [Metallic Sulfide Mining](#)

^{viii} Health Minnesota, [Radionuclides](#)