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Dear Member:     **Re: Bill 173, Mining Amendment Act – crucial omissions affecting Southern Ontario**

We are writing to you because you represent an electoral riding in Southern Ontario. You may not think the *Mining Amendment Act* is of much importance to you or your constituents, but that would be wrong. It is of critical importance, and we would like a few moments of your time to explain why, and what you need to consider as you prepare to vote on this legislation. Here's how thousands of your constituents are affected and why you should be concerned about the outcome.

The *Mining Act* applies to all of Ontario. Of particular concern to us is how it affects 'cottage country' in Southern Ontario. While it may seem that this is 'remote' from your day-to-day political concerns, it is an area only three hours' drive, or less, away from the built-up cities and towns of Southern Ontario. This is where you come in.

Hundreds of thousands, likely more than a million urban residents of Southern Ontario own and regularly use recreational properties, cabins and retreats in 'cottage country'. They are your constituents, and they vacation amongst us. The writers of this letter are from Haliburton, but the story is the same all across Ontario, from Lake Huron to the Ottawa River. Cottage country is under threat because of serious omissions in the *Mining Amendment Act*. To better understand why this is so, please read the 7-page brief enclosed. It is not long, and may give you a view of the matter that you have not before had explained. Our arguments are based on logic and economic realities, not emotion. It is critical that you consider them in the interest of your constituents in your southern riding, and the protection of their recreational properties which depend on the health and preservation of our environment. Year-round local residents benefit in large measure from the economy created by these tourist-recreational users who include, as well, many thousands of inner city dwellers who do not own properties here, but simply escape to do a day's fishing, swimming, skiing or relaxing.

The advent or return of mining to 'cottage country' will damage and degrade the environment which gives life to the recreational tourism that creates thousands of jobs, pays millions of dollars in municipal taxes and represents billions in capital investment. It will destroy the true economic base of life here. Two measures are needed to improve Bill 173: more complete environmental assessment of mining operations, starting with early exploration, and, more authority in the hands of local municipal councils to control, by way of Official Plans, if, when and where mining may take place, particularly when it comes to Crown lands within municipal borders. Presently, those powers are lacking and democratic rights of fair play for private citizens on neighbouring lands are trampled.

To learn more, please take time to read our brief. It requires but a few moments of your day.

Thank you.