

To: Governor Brian Kemp
206 Washington Street
Suite 203 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334
(404) 656-1776
brian.kemp@georgia.gov

Cc: Trey Kilpatrick, Chief of Staff
trey.kilpatrick@georgia.gov
Caylee Noggle, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations
caylee.noggle@georgia.gov
Bert Brantley, Deputy Chief of Staff, External Affairs
bert.brantley@georgia.gov



Re: Please stop a strip mine near the Okefenokee Swamp that threatens both Florida and Georgia

Dear Governor Kemp and staff,

On behalf of our respective organizations and our thousands of members, we are writing to express our concerns regarding the **Twin Pines Minerals, LLC application number SAS-2018-00554-SP-HAR**. Waterkeepers Florida is a regional entity composed of all 14 Waterkeeper organizations working in the State of Florida to protect and restore our water resources across over 45,000 square miles of watershed, which is home to over 15 million Floridians.

Georgia is all that stands between that titanium strip mine within a few miles of the Okefenokee Swamp, proposed by coal miners from Alabama. Part of the Okefenokee Swamp is in Florida, and the Swamp is the headwaters of both the St. Marys River, which forms part of the border between Georgia and Florida, and of the Suwannee River, which flows through Florida to the Gulf of Mexico. Thus if the mining activities of the applicant affect the Okefenokee, or the underlying Floridan Aquifer, they may affect the quality of the waters of the state of Florida. In addition, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge promises more economic benefit to Florida than any other NWR. <https://tinyurl.com/y5dws8oa>

Please direct the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to thoroughly examine the five state permit applications from Twin Pines Minerals, LLC (TPM). <https://wwals.net/?p=54009> The evidence indicates DNR should reject those applications. At the least, an environmental review equivalent to an Environmental Impact Statement should be conducted, with public hearings and third-party review.

The 60,000 people who wrote to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers against that mine are still opposed, despite the Corps abdicating its oversight. <https://wwals.net/?p=53867>

For many reasons to reject permits for this mine, see the resolution Waterkeepers Florida passed in October 2019. <https://wwals.net/?p=50562>

Since that resolution, even more reasons to reject that mine have been revealed. For example, the president of the mining applicant company was also a proponent of a biomass plant in Franklin County, Georgia, that caused a massive fish kill, and so much air pollution that the state of Georgia had to pass a law to stop it from burning railroad ties. For more on that and other examples, see the letter to you by our member Suwannee Riverkeeper of November 30, 2020.

<https://wwals.net/?p=54187>

Respectfully,

Lisa Rinaman
St. Johns Riverkeeper
Board Chair of Waterkeepers Florida

