

A Resolution that Waterkeepers Florida Opposes the Application by Twin Pines Minerals for a Titanium Mine near the Okefenokee Swamp,

and asks the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for an Environmental Impact Statement broad
enough to cover Florida issues,
for Public Hearings in Florida,
and to Answer how the Corps has determined or will determine that this mine would not
affect Florida

WHEREAS, the Okefenokee Swamp, partly in Florida; is a national and international treasure, for its wetland ecology, and for boating, fishing, and birding, and for hunting nearby; and

WHEREAS, the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) provides more economic benefit to Florida than any other NWR (see U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Banking On Nature 2017: The Economic Contributions of National Wildlife Refuge Recreational Visitation to Local Communities <https://www.fws.gov/economics/divisionpublications/bankingOnNature/BoN2017/bon2017.asp>); and

WHEREAS, the Okefenokee Swamp is the headwaters of the Suwannee River and of the St. Marys River, both of which are partly in Florida; and

WHEREAS, any change in the water level of the Swamp would affect the entire Okefenokee Swamp and the Suwannee River and the St. Marys River; and

WHEREAS, the Applicant's proposed mine in Charlton County, Georgia, would sit above the Floridan Aquifer, from which most of Florida drinks; and

WHEREAS, the miners have applied to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA-EPD) to withdraw 4.32 million gallons per day of water, more than four times as much as Folkston, the county seat of Charlton County (see <http://wwals.net/?p=50227>); and

WHEREAS, the Floridan Aquifer is already under stress with declining water levels from withdrawals in south Georgia and north Florida, including from existing mines; and

WHEREAS, the Applicant company, Twin Pines Minerals, is already under a Consent Order for multiple violations at four Chemours mine sites in north Florida (see <http://wwals.net/pictures/2019-02-07-lfco-chemours>); and

WHEREAS, infractions similar to those of the Florida Consent Order at the mine site in Georgia could adversely affect the Okefenokee Swamp, the St. Marys River, and the Suwannee River; and

WHEREAS, the only two Waterkeepers that straddle the GA-FL state line, Suwannee Riverkeeper and St. Marys Riverkeeper, have filed comments with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers asking for a full Environmental Impact Statement and Public Hearings (see <http://wwals.net/?p=50140> and <http://wwals.net/pictures/2019-09-12-st-marys-rk-usace-tpm/>); and