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Friends of Baxter State Park comments to Land Use Planning Commission  
on the Wolfden Mount Chase Application for Rezoning  
October 19, 2023

Friends of Baxter State Park would like to share its concerns about the Wolfden Mount Chase LLC application to the LUPC to rezone a 374-acre parcel, located in T6R6 from M-GN to D-PD. This parcel is located 14 miles from the eastern boundary of Baxter State Park and about three miles from property owned by Baxter State Park in the town of Mount Chase. An approved rezoning would allow Wolfden to seek a Department of Environmental Protection permit under Maine's Metallic Mineral Exploration, Advanced Exploration and Mining regulations to extract metallic ore rich in copper, lead, zinc, silver, and gold.

The rezoning application raises several concerns. The heart of our concern flows directly from our mission: *"Friends of Baxter State Park strives to inspire passion for the Park's wild character in the spirit of Percival Baxter. We promote exemplary use, natural resource stewardship, and a healthy Katahdin region to ensure the Park forever remains a refuge."*

Our major concern extends beyond the land area footprint of the proposed mine – the subject of this application – and focuses on the potential consequences both at the mine site and as a result of decoupling mining from processing. Wolfden expects to site the concentrator and tailings facilities outside of the T6 R6 parcel. To understand the impacts, the full operation must be examined as a whole.

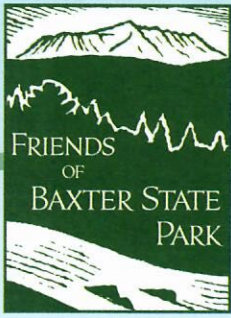
Pickett Mountain is located in the Mattawamkeag River watershed, the largest eastern tributary of the Penobscot River. Baxter State Park is also within the Penobscot watershed. The Mattawamkeag has the highest water quality classification for a river in Maine. Maine tribes depend on these source waters to support significant bird and fisheries habitat. From past experiences of mining operations, we have not seen enough evidence that there are proven, cost-effective technologies to avoid surface and groundwater pollution.

12 M.R.S.A., Section 685-A(8-A), specifies that no change in a district boundary shall be approved by the Commission unless there is substantial evidence that:

- a. The change would be consistent with the standards for D-PD Development Subdistrict boundaries in effect at the time; the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP); and the purpose, intent and provisions of 12 M.R.S.A. Chapter 206-A; and
- b. The change in districting will have no undue adverse impact on existing uses or resources or a new district designation is more appropriate for the protection and management of existing uses and resources within the affected area.

Based on the information provided to date, it is not clear that the applicant has met the standards for the zone change and that the rezoning would be consistent with the CLUP and the statute.

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- Governor Percival Baxter



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Moreover, the rezoning application asserts that the mine will showcase techniques that allow for responsible and safe extraction of metallic minerals and promises no adverse impact on the environment or surrounding areas. The reality is that any impacts of the project will be shared across the mining and the processing sites and from transportation between the two.

Metals mining has a history of causing long-term environmental damage. Guarantees of jobs and money to local communities tend to downplay the environmental risks associated with an operation. There are many examples of communities and states being burdened by mining impacts, with taxpayers often bearing the brunt of cleanup costs. One example is the Callahan mine in Brooksville, Maine – also in a sulfide deposit – which is now a federal Superfund site with estimated cleanup costs of more than \$55 million borne by taxpayers.

The Katahdin Region is working hard to recover from the economic devastation caused by the collapse of the pulp and paper industry. To move forward, the region needs sound development that meets the intent of all Maine's environmental and land use regulations. This rezoning application would decouple the mining from the processing, thereby avoiding a complete review of the impacts to the land, the communities and the people.

Thank you for considering these comments. We reserve the opportunity to provide further comments as more information becomes available.

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*- Governor Percival Baxter*