



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Citizens Oppose Weakening of Standards for Proposed Chippewa Falls Sand Mine
Carcinogenic air pollutants pose health risks to nearby residents

July 21, 2009

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CHIPPEWA COUNTY, WISCONSIN -- Loyalty to Our Land and Concerned Chippewa Citizens, grassroots organizations that are working to protect air quality and public health in the vicinity of the sand mine and processing facility proposed by Canadian Sand and Proppants, Inc. (CSP), have urged the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to resist CSP's attempts to have monitoring requirements weakened in the air permit they need to operate the mine and processing plant.

In a letter submitted to the DNR on their behalf by Midwest Environmental Advocates, a nonprofit environmental law center in Madison, citizens expressed concern over CSP's attempts to eliminate the monitoring requirements that will generate much needed data on the mine and plant's emissions of fine dust particles that pose a risk to public health.

Of chief concern to area residents is a substance known as respirable crystalline silica, a carcinogen that is subject to numerous labor and public exposure restrictions but not yet regulated as a hazardous air contaminant. The DNR has failed to undertake a study of the health risks posed by this hazardous substance, even though the agency was required by law to begin such a study no later than July 1, 2006. CSP has yet to provide DNR with necessary information on the content and particle size of the rock formation the company intends to mine – information that would help estimate the extent of the public health risk.

“Without appropriate modeling and monitoring of particulate matter and studies of respirable crystalline silica, neither citizens nor the DNR can know what the real health risks are from CSP's mining and processing operations,” said Pat Popple, of Concerned Chippewa Citizens. Ken Schmitt of Loyalty to Our Land said, “CSP says they want to be a good neighbor yet they oppose the DNR and citizens when it comes to monitoring the air around their facilities.”

“The air permit will prohibit the emissions of hazardous substances that are injurious to human health,” said Jamie Saul, Staff Attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates. “But there is no way the company can demonstrate compliance with that prohibition without adequate monitoring at both the mine and the processing plant.”

More information is available at www.midwestadvocates.org.

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FAST FACTS

- Crystalline silica, or quartz, is a ubiquitous substance found in sand and rock. It is one component of the particulate matter commonly emitted by sand mines, quarries, and other industrial activities. Very small, invisible particles of crystalline silica become “respirable.” When inhaled they can cause silicosis and cancer, and contribute to or exacerbate other respiratory conditions.
- The DNR did not consider, or require Canadian Sand and Proppants to consider, all of the possible sources of emissions of particulate matter, and hence respirable crystalline silica, in their estimates of the amounts of these pollutants that may be emitted by mining, blasting, crushing, storage, transporting and processing of silica sand. DNR records show that:
 - Detailed analysis of the rock formation that will be mined to determine the amount of respirable crystalline silica contained in it was not performed
 - Estimates of the amount of fine particulate matter likely to be emitted through various mining and processing activities were not produced
 - Estimates of the content and size of the mining reject material were not provided
- State law required DNR to undertake a study of crystalline silica to evaluate the sources and amounts of emissions and the strategies available to reduce public health risks, and to report on the progress of the study by July 1, 2006. This study has not occurred.
- Midwest Environmental Advocates is the first and only non-profit environmental law center in Wisconsin. MEA provides legal and technical support and representation to grassroots groups that are working for environmental justice in the Western Great Lakes region. Please see www.midwestadvocates.org for more information.
- Concerned Chippewa Citizens is a grassroots organization dedicated to preserving and improving the quality of life in the Chippewa Valley. Please see <http://ccc-wis.com/> for more information.
- Loyalty to our Land is a grassroots organization whose mission is to preserve what was left for us by past generations, preserve what we have now, and preserve our region for generations to come. Please see <http://loyaltytoourland.com/> for more information.