



109TH DISTRICT  
STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 30014  
LANSING, MI 48909-7514

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**SARA CAMBENSY**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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November 12, 2020

Mr. Barry Hildred  
President and CEO  
Aquila Resources, Inc.  
E807 Gerue St.  
Stephenson, MI 49887

Re: Back Forty Project

Dear Mr. Hildred,

As Michigan's 109<sup>th</sup> District State Representative, I feel fortunate to have all of the active ferrous and non-ferrous metallic mines operating safely in my territory, offering tremendous job opportunities for the residents I serve in the Central U.P. Though I am currently the only elected Democrat north of Saginaw in the Michigan Legislature, my House seat has a long history of previous representatives from my party who adamantly supported and fought to keep our mining companies strong, doing whatever they could in Lansing to help. I'm proud to keep that tradition of support alive for mining during my tenure as a legislator.

All of us with roots in the area have a story about mining- either from our ancestors who worked in one, or our families who have felt the pain of the bust and boom cycle. I am old enough to remember how the 1981 idling of our iron ore mines in the region impacted my family and watched classmates and neighborhood friends suddenly leave without their fathers ever being able to move back for the good job they once had in mining. When the idling of the Empire Mine was announced in 2016, it felt like it was happening all over again. Yet upon closer inspection, knowing how rich our ore bodies are and comparing what Minnesota had been doing for two decades already, it was clear Michigan had dropped the ball by not investing in the next generation of mining research, the processing of our ore bodies, the infrastructure that supports mining, and GIS mapping, among other key areas. Once elected, I passed my first piece of legislation that formed the Committee on Michigan's Mining Future to help improve and move mining in Michigan forward. I am extremely hopefully that it will help future mines like the Back Forty project succeed (<https://www.upmatters.com/news/committee-on-michigans-mining-future-becomes-law/>).

Modern mining techniques already being used in the U.P. have proven we can have 21<sup>st</sup> century mining operations that provide good jobs while protecting the environment, even with some of the most stringent environmental laws in the nation. Realizing my view and comfort level with mining is unusual for a Democrat, I also understand that part of my responsibility is to help educate others in my party to overcome the negative stigma and fear they often have towards extractive industries. I know this will be important for your company going forward as you work with Governor Whitmer and her respective state

departments to reach your final permit and approval phase to construct the Back Forty Mine, and I stand by ready to help ease those conversations if needed.

I appreciate your team's effort to always keep my office informed about where you are at in the process and what you may need help with. Dave Anderson has done an excellent job communicating with legislators, and I believe his intuition on how to navigate and move the Back Forty Mine project forward in Lansing during the final permitting phase is accurate and respectable. Your company's leadership gives legislators reassurance that the Back Forty Mine is ready to be another example of a modern mining company in Michigan that set the bar high for mining safely, while bringing good paying jobs we desperately need to help our U.P. economy.

Thank you for your investment in our state. I look forward to working with you and your team for a long time to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "SARA CAMBENSY". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sara Cambensy  
State Representative, 109<sup>th</sup> District