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Mining opponents question Twin Pines' experience

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A lawyer leading the opposition of a proposed mine near the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is questioning the qualifications of Twin Pines Minerals to safely mine near the world-famous blackwater swamp and claims campaign contributions to the state's top elected leadership is why the operation is even still an issue.

Joshua Marks, an environmental lawyer who helped convince DuPont not to mine titanium near the Okefenokee in the late 1990s, is leading the opposition to the Alabama-based company's permit request to mine near the swamp.

"Twin Pines Minerals has zero experience with building titanium strip mines," Marks said. "Its only experience with titanium is from recycling old mine tailings at the Chemours titanium mine in Florida, and at a U.S. mine kaolin operation in California. The only experience its executives have had with active construction and operation of mines has been with coal mining in Alabama for a company called Drummond Coal, which itself has had a terrible environmental track record."



Marks said Twin Pines has "repeatedly" violated the law during the development of the Okefenokee project.

“Twin Pines Minerals failed to have a Georgia-licensed geologist supervise the drilling of over 380 exploratory boreholes in violation of Georgia law, failed to get a land disturbance permit from Charlton County when it cleared 17 acres of land at its site, and falsely stated to EPD and the U.S. Corps of Engineers that it had a lease on its neighbor’s property, and then again falsely claimed it was negotiating for such a lease,” he said.



Marks said Twin Pines has a “sister company,” Georgia Renewable Power, that is owned and operated by the same team that has been cited for land, air and water violations at its two bioenergy plants in North Georgia. The company has paid more than \$1 million in fines and is being sued by 30 families for noise and odor pollution, Marks said.

The only reason this project continues to receive consideration is the “enormous amount of money” the company, its executives and a dozen lobbyists have donated to the political leadership of the state, Marks said.

“Evidence shows that Gov. Kemp has received over \$40K from Twin Pines Minerals, its executives and its lobbyists since 2019, and Lt. Gov. Jones received \$5K from Twin Pines Minerals President Steve Ingle alone in the fall of 2022,” Marks said.

“Instead of taking money from an Alabama mining company with an atrocious background, Gov. Kemp, Lt. Gov. Jones and other senior leadership should follow the science, the law, and the will of the public, deny the project’s permits, and permanently protect our state’s greatest natural treasure,” he said.



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