



May 29, 2024

On June 11, Warren and Union residents will be able to vote on ordinance changes that regulate and control metallic mineral mining in their towns. Before voting, there is important information about the history and substance of these issues of which voters should be aware.

In February 2023, Canadian mineral exploration company Exiro Minerals Corporation approached Warren and Union disclosing that it had acquired a lease on a Warren property near the shores of the pristine Crawford Pond – one of several bodies of water in the interconnected Georges River Watershed. Exiro Minerals does business in the United States as Wintergreen Resources. You can read more about Exiro and their specific plans in Warren and Union here. <https://exirowintergreen.com/>

Warren and Union residents voiced overwhelming opposition to industrial metallic mineral exploration and mining in their residential towns because of the significant risks metallic mining would pose to the Georges River Watershed. They also expressed concern over the negative impact even metallic mineral exploration (let alone a metallic mining operation) would have on the local economy, which is based on the area's natural beauty, serenity and clean air and water. Residents mobilized rapidly, forming advocacy group "Citizens Against Residential Mining Activity" ("CARMA") to go head-to-head with Exiro on behalf of town residents. You can read more about CARMA here. <https://carmamaine.com/>

CARMA is now supported by hundreds of members, most of whom are residents of Warren and Union. CARMA relies on a panel of scientists and mining experts as well as a legal team that has deep experience implementing solutions to similar threats in other locations in Maine. CARMA is also part of a network of other organizations that seek to preserve the beauty of Maine's natural environment and has advised several Maine towns on how to implement legally defensible strategies for preventing mining interests from destroying the local environments and economies.

Last year, CARMA proposed putting ordinance changes to town votes through valid citizens' petitions, which were signed by more than 650 Warren and Union residents. Under CARMA's proposal, metallic mineral mining would be permitted in both towns, but only if it were of a non-industrial scale. CARMA's proposal did not impose any new restrictions on *non-metallic* mineral mining, such as gravel extraction.

The Union Select Board accepted the citizens' petition, put CARMA's proposed ordinance changes to a town vote and they were adopted and implemented after 580 Union residents voted in favor of them by town referendum last summer. Those ordinance changes have now been in effect for about a year. This means that at present

Union residents have specific restrictions protecting them from the adverse effects of an industrial-scale metallic mineral mining operation in their community.

The Warren Select Board declined to present CARMA's citizens' petition to the voters last summer and instead implemented a moratorium on any potential mining exploration and extraction. The Warren Select Board then formed a citizen committee to study the matter. That committee has now completed its work and has proposed changes to Warren's existing metallic mining ordinance (Question A), its land use ordinance (Question B) and its shoreland zoning ordinance (Question C). These changes will be voted on by referendum on June 11 (and absentee ballots are available now). Taken together, these changes – if adopted – would implement strict controls on metallic mineral mining and exploration in Warren. Without enacting these changes, Warren would have far more limited protection from industrial metallic mineral mining once the moratorium expires. While this is not what CARMA proposed by citizens' petition, we believe that it is a favorable solution for regulating and controlling industrial metallic mineral exploration and mining in Warren and we applaud the Warren Metallic Mineral Mining Committee and the Planning and Select Boards for their dedication to the issue. CARMA, therefore, encourages Warren voters to **vote "YES" on Questions A, B and C** to implement greater restrictions and controls on metallic mineral mining in Warren.

In Union, after 580 residents voted to implement the mining restrictions that were put to a vote by citizens' petition last year, the Union Planning Board this year is proposing changes to those restrictions. Those changes, as explained at a Union Planning Board meeting, would allow the Planning Board to approve industrial-scale metallic mineral mining in a future to-be-determined area (anywhere within a so-called "floating industrial district"). If the Planning Board were to approve such an application pursuant to the town's updated metallic mining ordinance, the fixed location of the industrial district would then require approval by a majority of Union's residents. At present, the Union Planning Board does not have discretion to approve industrial-scale metallic mineral mining; but they will if their proposed ordinance changes are adopted. While this is not what CARMA proposed or what Union residents approved last year, CARMA appreciates that the Union Planning Board has proposed these changes in reliance on advice from its land-use attorneys and that any approval of an industrial-scale mine by the Union Planning Board could not proceed without a town vote. Accordingly, because CARMA understands and agrees with the intent of these changes and in the spirit of compromise and support for our town officials, CARMA is comfortable recommending that Union voters **vote "YES" on Articles 4 and 5.**

Absentee ballots are currently available from both towns by calling the town office. Live voting in both towns will be on June 11 from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM. In Warren, polling will be at the Masonic Hall (105 Camden Road). In Union, polling will be at the William L. Pullen Municipal Building (567 Common Road).

The Board of Directors of CARMA
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