



Support a Review of Proposals for Non-Ferrous Sulfide Mining

POSITION: Hospitality Minnesota supports a responsible and rigorous environmental review of proposals for non-ferrous sulfide ore mining in Northeastern Minnesota.

BACKGROUND: There has been significant exploration in Aitkin, Lake and St. Louis counties in Northeastern Minnesota for ores containing copper, nickel, cobalt and other metals. According to the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, over \$200 million has been spent on drilling and other exploratory activity. All the ores found contain sulfide in addition to valuable metals.

The areas being considered for mining are amid pristine and important natural areas. Protecting our lakes, rivers and ground water from pollution is extremely important to the future of tourism and the continued success of the membership of Hospitality Minnesota.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS:

- The mining and processing of these ores pose a danger of sulfides combining with water to produce sulfuric acid. Very serious damage to the environment has occurred in other parts of the country from poorly planned or unregulated mining of ores containing sulfide.
- The technology being proposed for these mines is new and still under development.
- There is a licensing process underway for the Polymet proposal near Hoyt Lakes. Future applications are expected for mines near Ely in St. Louis County and Tamarack in Aitkin County. The mineral leases for the project near Ely are being challenged in federal litigation.
- Because water pollution can occur for a very long time after mining is completed, we support strict financial requirements that are immune from future bankruptcy filings.