STATE OF MINNESOTA

COUNTY OF RAMSEY

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

0086

In the Matter of the Applications of Reserve Mining Company for All Necessary Permits, Approvals and Certifications for the Mile Post 7 (Lax Lake) On-land Tailings Disposal System Near Silver Bay, Minnesota

NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF FINAL EIS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that pursuant to MEQC 26(j)(1) of the Rules and Regulations of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Council, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, one of the Responsible Agencies for the purpose of preparing the Final Environmental Impact Statement in the above-entitled matter, does hereby deem the Final Environmental Impact Statement to be complete as of June 2, 1976 and does transmit the same to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Council for its review.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

By _____
Robert L. Herbst, Commissioner

7. In addition to the changes designed to accomodate on land disposal of tailings, the proposed plan includes major changes in plant operations to improve the physical and chemical quality of Reserve's pellets by increasing the iron content and reducing the silica content.

8. Reserve's current 40 year mining plan provides for mining approximately 30,000,000 tons of ore per year. The ore body being mined is sufficient for 50 to 60 years of open pit mining. In addition the mine contains extensive reserves of ores which will likely be useable in the relatively near future as new processes are perfected.

9. The proposed tailings disposal facility would store only 40 years of tailings from Reserve's operations, and the possibilities for expansion in the original design have been eliminated by design revisions. There is no evidence that Reserve plans to terminate operations at the end of its current 40 year mining plan.

Description of Proposal

10. The on land disposal plan is designed as a closed-circuit system with no intentional discharge of water or tailings to Lake Superior or any streams flowing into the lake, except for relatively small amounts of uncollected seepage.

11. The proposed tailings disposal area occupies a portion of the Beaver River watershed approximately 14.3

square miles in size, including approximately six square miles for a tailings basin and the remainder for the necessary roads, railroad tracks, pipeline terminus and other related facilities and buffer areas.

12. The proposed tailings basin would require construction of four dams, the designs for which have been substantially modified since the preparation of the draft environmental impact statement. The south dam, the largest structure in the plan was originally designed to be about 12,600 feet along and about 150 feet high. The most recent modifications would increase the length to nearly 14,000 feet and the height to about 180 feet. The north dam as originally designed would have been 5,200 feet long and about 120 feet high, the Bear Lake dam 2,800 feet long and about 130 feet high, and the northeast saddle dam 1,700 feet long and about 80 feet high. The modified design would require comparable increases in the height and some adjustment in the length of these dams. In addition, seepage recovery dams, diversion dikes and saddle dikes would be constructed.

13. Prior to the start of construction of the main north and south dams, starter dams would be constructed of material from a borrow pit at Mile Post 32 on the Reserve railroad. This construction would take two to three years to complete.