

From:
To: MN_Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Mile Post 7 Stream Review & Environmental Assessment
Date: Monday, May 8, 2023 12:13:07 PM

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Mr. Johnson,

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I write to express my concern about effects of the proposed expansion of the Northshore Mile Post 7 tailings basin on the water quality of Lake Superior and on human health and safety.

The only environmental impact statement (EIS) performed by the State of Minnesota for the Mile Post 7 tailings basin was done in 1976, almost half a century ago. That final EIS required a tailings dam at the Mile Post 7 location must use “downstream” construction methods for stability. Even with that less risky construction method, the EIS recommended against locating a tailings basin so close to Lake Superior.

In 1977, the courts forced Minnesota agencies to accept the Mile Post 7 site preferred by Reserve Mining. But no courts have prevented the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from conducting a rigorous EIS review since then. That is on you.

There has never been any environmental review of the “upstream” dam raises the DNR approved for the Mile Post 7 dams since 1997, of the coal ash waste facility or tailings basin expansion near that facility, or of the impacts of climate change on potential Mile Post 7 tailings dam failure.

REQUEST: To protect Lake Superior and community safety, I request that DNR perform an EIS for the Mile Post 7 tailings basin expansion focused on the cumulative effects of its structure, location, size, and height, and alternatives that would avoid and minimize risks of dam breach and contamination of water resources, as well as impacts to wetlands and streams.

In addition, even though the 1977 Mile Post 7 “Master Permit” said that the permit would expire in 1982 and could only be renewed for 5-year periods consistent with Minnesota statutes, this requirement has not been followed. The last permit to mine for the tailings basin was in 1985 and expired long ago. There has never been a dam safety permit for the tailings basin.

REQUEST: To protect Lake Superior and community safety, I request that DNR use an open public permitting process and require both a current permit to mine and a dam safety permit for the Mile Post 7 tailings basin that satisfies all Minnesota statutes and rules and provides a rigorous dam breach study and closure/reclamation plan with sufficient financial assurance to protect Minnesota taxpayers.

It is not too late to protect Lake Superior waters and community health and safety by requiring

an EIS and appropriate permits for the Mile Post 7 tailings basin expansion.

Sincerely,

Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Phone