



WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE NORTHMET MINING PROJECT?

What does this adequacy determination mean?

The adequacy determination marks the end of the state Environmental Impact Statement process under the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act, but it does not mean the NorthMet project has been approved or may proceed to construction. Additional environmental analysis and evaluation will occur upon receipt of permit applications. The federal environmental review process is ongoing until both the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) issue their final Records of Decision.

Can project construction begin?

No. The Adequacy Determination is not a project approval. There is no single permit that would authorize the project as a whole. In order to proceed, the NorthMet project would need to receive more than 20 types of local, state and federal approvals and permits. Each required permit would authorize specific activities related to the project and each has its own applicable rules and processes.

What permits are needed?

At the state level, the proposed NorthMet project would require up to seven types of permits from the DNR, six from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and three from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Key state permits include the permit to mine and dam safety permit from the DNR as well as the water quality and air quality permits from MPCA. Additional permit requirements may be identified during the permitting phase.

Are there public input opportunities associated with permit application processing?

Yes. Each separate permit has its own processing requirements. Some have established public input requirements and some do not. DNR's permit to mine process does include an established opportunity for public input. MPCA's water quality permitting process will also facilitate public input. Discussions have begun to identify ways the public can stay informed and engage regulators during the permitting process for all required state permits.

What is the timing for permit decisions?

The timing of permit decisions is dependent on multiple factors, including the thoroughness of the company's permit applications. The state agencies understand that PolyMet has been working to develop its permit applications, making use of the analysis contained in the EIS. Though they have been working on information for the applications, to date the company has not submitted any applications for state permits. The agencies will be better able to estimate the timing of the permit processes after PolyMet submits its permit applications. It is important to note that DNR's permit to mine process requires a pre-application Public Informational Meeting to be held before the agency can accept a permit application.