



Effective Commenting on the Final EIS

Public participation and input is an important part of the state and federal environmental review processes. Publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for the proposed NorthMet Mining Project and Land Exchange in the Federal Register on November 13, 2015 will mark the start of a 30-day review period. The public may use this period to submit comments to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) on the adequacy of the document.

All public comments are recorded and archived, and become part of the permanent public record of the proposed project.

How can I most effectively communicate my message?

At this phase of the environmental review process the MDNR seeks comments that address the adequacy of the Final EIS. The following chart helps explain the types of comments that are sought by MDNR and the types of comments that are less useful:

Relevant to MDNR Adequacy Decision	Not Relevant to MDNR Adequacy Decision
Comments on, with reasonable basis, whether the Final EIS analyzed both required topics and any additional topics identified during the scoping phase of environmental review	Comments simply in favor or against the proposed project
Comments on, with reasonable basis, whether the Final EIS responded to comments received on the Supplemental Draft EIS	Comments that do not pertain to the analysis of the NorthMet Mining Project and/or Land Exchange
Comments on, with reasonable basis, whether the MDNR followed the process established in state statute and rule preparing an EIS.	Comments that suggest topics other than those required or those identified during scoping should be included in the EIS

Are these comment guidelines applicable to all the Co-lead Agencies involved in the EIS?

The comment guidelines above apply to the action that the MDNR needs to take on the adequacy of the Final EIS. Following the Final EIS publication, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) each will follow their own final steps in completing the federal environmental review process. For both the federal agencies, the process culminates in a Record of Decision (ROD).

The USFS will make a draft ROD available to the public shortly after the publication of the FEIS and will initiate a 45-day "objection" period pursuant to the regulations at 36 C.F.R. Part 218, Subparts A and B. An objection resolution process will follow, after which the ROD will be finalized.

The USACE will begin drafting its ROD after the Final EIS is made publicly available. The USACE will consider public interest factors found at 33 CFR 320.4, and compliance with the 404(b)(1) guidelines in

determining whether the project is in the overall public interest. A USACE decision on whether to issue a Department of the Army permit for impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands, will be made after the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has made its decision on 401-certification for wetland impacts.

How can I submit my comments in writing?

Written comments should be e-mailed to NorthMetFEIS.dnr@state.mn.us. E-mail submissions should include a full name and legal mailing address. Written comments may also be submitted to:

Lisa Fay, EIS Project Manager
MDNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources
Environmental Review Unit
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

All comments must be made by 4:30 PM on December 14, 2015.

Comments will become part of the official record and as such, may be made available for public examination. Comments and submittals will not be edited to remove any identifying or contact information. Therefore, the Co-lead Agencies suggest that commenters not submit information that may cause the commenter concern if publicly disclosed.

Also, refer to additional Fact Sheets about the NorthMet Mining Project and Land Exchange Final EIS:

1. **Project and Land Exchange Overview**
2. **What is the Environmental Review Process?**
3. **What's Changed since the Draft EIS?**
4. **What's Changed since the Supplemental Draft EIS?**
5. **Supplemental Draft EIS Comment Response Process**
6. **Effective Commenting on the Final EIS**
7. **A Guide to the Final EIS Document**
8. **Air Quality**
9. **Water Quantity**
10. **Wetlands**
11. **Water Quality**
12. **Wild Rice**
13. **Mercury**
14. **Threatened & Endangered Species**
15. **Cultural Resources**
16. **Land Exchange**
17. **Reclamation & Financial Assurance**
18. **Cumulative Effects**
19. **Tailings Basin Stability**
20. **Water Modeling**
21. **Northward Flowpath**
22. **Duration of Treatment & Financial Assurance**
23. **Human Health**