



Effective Commenting

Public participation and input is an important part of the state and federal environmental review processes. Clear, concise, and relevant comments will not only be understood more easily, but they will also have a better chance of impacting the final version of the Environmental Impact Statement for the NorthMet Mining Project and Land Exchange.

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?

The most important part of providing an effective comment is for it to be informed, specific, and substantive. In particular substantive questions or solution-oriented positions with examples should be provided because the lead agencies will respond to them in writing. Here is a chart that helps explain what substantive and non-substantive comments are like:

Substantive comments ...	Non-substantive comments ...
Question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information provided in the SDEIS.	Are simply in favor or against the proposed project.
Question, with reasonable basis, the methodology or assumptions used for the environmental analysis.	Present comments that don't pertain to the analysis of the NorthMet Mining Project and/or Land Exchange.
Present new information or impacts relevant to the analysis that have not been evaluated.	Present comments that only agree or disagree with Co-lead Agencies policy or decisions without reasonable justification or supporting data.
Show that while certain environmental impacts have been identified, they have not been adequately addressed	Present comments that do not say why an impact should undergo further assessment.
Present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the SDEIS.	Present unreasonable alternatives.
Cause changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives.	Present vague, open-ended questions about an alternative.
Suggest possible mitigation measures that could or should be added to the proposal.	Don't provide a potential solution to the impact in question.
Are polite and respectful in tone.	Use an aggressive or confrontational tone.

How can I participate and make a public comment?

Three public input meetings will be held in January 2014; one near the project site, one in Duluth, and one in the Twin Cities metro area. At the public input meetings, stenographers will be available to record your verbal comments, or you may submit your comments in writing. You may also register to speak at the podium for a pre-determined length of time and have your comment recorded by a stenographer.

How can I submit my comments in writing?

Written comments should be e-mailed to NorthMetSDEIS.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 March 13, 2014.

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 SDEIS:

- 1. What is the Environmental Review Process?**
- 2. Effective Commenting**
- 3. A Guide to the SDEIS Document**
- 4. What's Changed Since the DEIS?**
- 5. Project & Land Exchange Overview**
- 6. Land Exchange**
- 7. Reclamation and Financial Assurance**
- 8. Water Quality**
- 9. Wetlands**
- 10. Air Quality**
- 11. Wild Rice**
- 12. Mercury**
- 13. Threatened & Endangered Species**
- 14. Cumulative Effects**
- 15. Cultural Resources**
- 16. Water Quantity**