

CENTERPIECE

## LETTERS FROM READERS - 1-29-25

Jan 30, 2025



*Letters to the editor are not fact checked by the Aitkin Age and should be considered matters of opinion. The deadline to submit letters to the editor is 4:30 p.m. on Thursdays.*

### **Why should we trust Talon?**

A new mine plan was recently released for Talon Metals' Tamarack nickel mine project. This new environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) is not a gift to Aitkin County residents; it's a warning. Talon isn't telling the truth about its mine.

Talon first announced its mine in June 2023, saying this was a "green mine" to generate nickel and copper "for electric vehicle battery cathode production." Now Talon's stated purpose is to mine "non-ferrous metallic sulfide ore" for transfer by rail to North Dakota for processing. It's only a green mine if you count the color of mone

Talon insists processing of sulfide ore and disposal of the reactive tailings from the mine “is not part of the project,” since all the rock containing ore would be sent 500 miles away for processing. Talon’s recent press release bragging about getting more government subsidies admitted that the promised North Dakota processing is “novel” and still in “research and development” paid for by the feds to determine if it has “efficacy and viability.” In English, Talon’s process has never been used outside a lab and nobody knows if it will work.

In 2023, Talon promised the “innovation” of using a tunnel-boring machine through bedrock avoiding impacts of blasting a mine shaft beneath wetlands. The boring machine has been rejected in favor of (cheaper) blasting. In its earlier plans, Talon also claimed they’d use battery electric vehicles to reduce the mine’s carbon footprint. Talon has now admitted that all its equipment will be (cheaper/dirtier) diesel.

Assuming there will be workers at the mine, there are even more problems with the new plan. Talon claims that the portal to its underground mine would provide “fresh air intake” for workers. But, the portal would open inside the building where toxic ore and waste rock would be stored/crushed. Although the initial mine would be 2,000 feet deep, the deepest ventilation to the surface for workers would end at 1,000 feet. Diesel fumes and nickel dust would cause lung cancer.

Talon claims that the mine “project” they want Minnesota agencies to permit involves only 225 acres of underground mining. That’s less than one-tenth of 1% of the 31,000 acres of sulfide ore mining leases Talon controls for a “district-scale” deposit. Some parts of this huge deposit are close to the surface, accessible by open pit, not underground mining.



Talon’s greenwashing is wearing thin. Aitkin County residents and Minnesotans downstream deserve to know the truth about the mine: Is the plan to process sulfide rock 500 miles away speculative? How enormous is the mine expected to be? Using real technology and at its foreseeable size, how would this affect neighbors, workers, land,

air and water?

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