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# Minnesota DNR announces new mine proposal from Talon Metals

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Talon’s Latest Plans Deny “Green” Purpose, Reveal Ore Processing is Still in “Research & Development” Stage, and Suggest Threats to Workers and the Environment

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has released a new Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) as part of environmental review for the proposed Talon Metals nickel sulfide-ore mine in Aitkin County, Minnesota. The new plan and Talon’s recent press release raise issues of purpose, viability, and potential adverse effects on workers as well as nearby Minnesota communities and ecosystems.

**Purpose.** In June 2023, Talon’s EAW plan stated that the purpose of its mine project was to generate nickel and copper concentrate “for electric vehicle battery cathode production” based on “Talon’s existing offtake agreement with Tesla” as “part of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.” (June 2023 EAW, page 28). Talon’s December 2024 EAW now states the purpose of the Project is to mine “non-ferrous metallic sulfide ore”

for transfer by rail to Mercer County, North Dakota for processing of nickel, copper, and iron products. (December 2024 EAW, page 64).

### **North Dakota Processing.**

Talon's December 2024 EAW insists that offsite processing in North Dakota "is not part of the Project" (December 2024 EAW, page 16) and provides no information on what would happen to ore mined in Minnesota. But Talon's recent press release makes it clear that Talon is proposing a "novel" metals extraction process, which is still in a "research and development process" subsidized by the government to determine if it has "efficacy and viability." (Talon December 11, 2024 Press Release). Both the North Dakota site and process are speculative.

**Talon Plan Details.** Talon's new plan claims that the "portal" to its underground mine would provide "fresh air intake" for workers. But, the portal would open inside the "ore transfer building," where toxic ore and waste rock would be stored and crushed. Talon's new plan says the mine would be 2,000 vertical feet below the surface, but the deepest surface ventilation would end at 1,000 feet and a secondary mine exit would be provided only at 295 feet (December 2024 EAW, pages 27, 28, 39). Talon has rejected in-mine electric vehicles in favor of diesel due to cost, committed to no specific method of treatment for its huge volume of mine wastewater, and proposed to transfer its toilet waste to an unspecified municipal system rather than treating it. ( Id., pages 41-42, 51, 88).

Paula Maccabee, Executive Director and Counsel for WaterLegacy, explains, "Talon's greenwashing is wearing thin. The purpose of its proposed mine, unsurprisingly, is simply to extract sulfide ores for profit." Maccabee continued, "Even more troubling, Talon is asking Minnesota to approve a sketchy sulfide mine proposal when Talon doesn't have the foggiest idea how they would process any ore that might be mined in our Mississippi River watershed. Talon is wasting Minnesota's time to review a project based on speculative technology that isn't even at a pilot project stage. Nothing about Talon's sulfide mine proposal is trustworthy."

**Background on the Talon Mine Project:** Talon's December 2024 EAW is available [here](#), and Talon's December 11, 2024 press release is available [here](#). The first stage of th

environmental review process, began on June 21, 2023 with the submission of Talon Metals' initial EAW to the DNR. On September 18, 2023, Talon received the first round of comments from the DNR and tribal governments on their proposed plan. Talon submitted a second project proposal to the DNR on October 11, 2023 and received a second round of comments from the DNR and tribal governments on February 5, 2024. More information on the proposed Talon mine project is available on WaterLegacy's website.

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