



Health Professionals & Scientists Concerned About Health Impacts of PolyMet's Mine Plan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LEADING MINNESOTA MEDICAL, HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY GROUPS CALL FOR POLYMET SULFIDE MINE HEALTH EFFECTS ANALYSIS

Minnesota Public Health Association, Minnesota Medical Association, Minnesota Citizens Federation Northeast, Healthy Food Action and Food & Water Watch Midwest Region Join Citizens, Professionals to Request Study of PolyMet Sulfide Mine Health Threats

DULUTH, MN: October 20, 2014 – The Minnesota Public Health Association, Minnesota Medical Association, Minnesota Citizens Federation Northeast, Healthy Food Action and Food and Water Watch Midwest Region have joined a groundswell of citizens and professionals asking Governor Mark Dayton and state agencies to require a health risk assessment of the threats to infants, children and adults posed by Minnesota's controversial PolyMet sulfide mine project.

WaterLegacy reports that 153 individual Minnesota doctors, nurses, scientists and health professionals have signed letters to Governor Dayton and Minnesota agencies calling for a health risk assessment of the PolyMet mine and an evaluation of its public health impacts before any decisions are made on Minnesota's first proposed sulfide mine project. Another 3,500 citizens have sent letters or signed petitions to Governor Dayton making the same requests to protect the health of Minnesota infants, children and adults.

"The proposed PolyMet copper-nickel mine project threatens to increase toxic methylmercury in fish, arsenic in Minnesota drinking water and many other contaminants," explained Duluth physician Susan Nordin, "Doctors, scientists and health professionals across Minnesota are asking that state officials put human health first before deciding whether to allow sulfide mining in Minnesota."

Kathleen Schuler, a member of the Minnesota Public Health Association Policy Committee, emphasized, "Sulfide mining in Minnesota is not only an environmental issue. It is a public health issue." She noted, "We can't afford additional mercury affecting babies and children in Minnesota. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin and 1 out of 10 infants in our Lake Superior Region are already born with unsafe levels of mercury in their blood."

Margaret Saracino, a psychiatrist practicing in Duluth, underscored, “Health impacts to the developing brains of children have widespread costs to our communities, ranging from lost productivity to special education and health care costs. We already have a shortage of psychiatrists to treat children and adolescents.” She noted, “It is short-sighted to allow sulfide mining without evaluating all of these public health costs.”

Letters signed by the Minnesota Public Health Association, Minnesota Medical Association, Minnesota Citizens Federation Northeast, Healthy Food Action and Food & Water Watch Midwest Region, along with individual doctors, nurses, public health professionals, scientists, and citizens all request that the Governor order a health risk assessment of the PolyMet sulfide mine as part of the environmental review process, to provide better scientific data on issues like mercury contamination of fish, toxic pollutants in drinking water, and cancer risks to potential on-site workers, all under the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Health. Once more complete and accurate scientific information is available, they request a health impact assessment process to engage the community in an open discussion of the public health costs and impacts of the PolyMet sulfide mine.

These recent requests for assessment of PolyMet health effects join comments made by 46 doctors, the Minnesota Nurses Association and the Minnesota Department of Health during the PolyMet comment period requesting an assessment of the public health impacts of the proposed PolyMet sulfide mine.

Copies of letters and petitions requesting health effects assessment before decisions are made on the PolyMet sulfide mine project are being provided to Governor Mark Dayton and state agency leaders today.

Media may contact Paula Maccabee, WaterLegacy, at 651-646-8890 or pmaccabee@justchangelaw.com for copies of letters and fact sheets.