

Joint Counties

Natural Resources Board

Aitkin ~ Beltrami ~ Clearwater ~ Koochiching ~ Lake of the Woods ~ Mahanomen ~ Marshall ~ Roseau

Beltrami County Conference Room
701 Minnesota Avenue, NW
Bemidji, MN 56601

www.jointcountiesnaturalresourcesboard.com

Resolution of the Joint Counties Natural Resources Board

Support PolyMet Mining NorthMet Project Adopted May 18, 2015

WHEREAS, nonferrous ores contain metals essential to modern daily life - copper, nickel, cobalt, platinum, palladium and gold - found in countless products including cell phones, computers, diabetic test strips, joint replacements, electrical wiring, hybrid cars, catalytic converters, and wind turbines; and

WHEREAS, the significant domestic demand for these metals exceeds our national supply due to very few mines in the U.S. producing them, creating an unhealthy imbalance and outside reliance on indispensable raw materials, even with the high rate of recycling (the U.S. currently imports nearly 90 percent of its platinum, more than 50 percent of its palladium, approximately 35 percent of its copper and gold, and does not have any active nickel mines); and

WHEREAS, the proposed PolyMet site is located near the community of Hoyt Lakes, within an existing mining district where operating and former iron mines and processing facilities already exist and, with the existing infrastructure in place, the site is viewed as conducive for such an initiative without threatening our region's environment; and

WHEREAS, the ore industry has for generations supported tens of thousands of families in our region, dozens of communities, schools, commerce and recreation centers, and has created opportunities for scores of children to attend universities and technical schools to develop their own careers and families within the region; and

WHEREAS, an independent research study conducted by the University of Minnesota Duluth Labovitz School of Business and Economics indicated that the evolution of nonferrous mining in the region has the potential to generate more than 600 indirect jobs in goods and services; \$515 million annually in St. Louis County alone in wages, benefits and other spending (more than \$10 billion over the 20-year life of mine); \$15 million annually in state and local tax revenues (\$300 million over the life of mine); \$45 million annually in federal tax revenue (\$900 million over the life of the mine); and more than \$2 million annually for northeastern Minnesota schools; and

WHEREAS, the Northeast region is well positioned to support the addition of PolyMet Mining to the complement of local employers due to the high availability of skilled and dedicated workers and a comprehensive employment and training system to develop the appropriate workforce; and

WHEREAS, the primary administrator of workforce development programs and funding in the region, the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training is actively engaged in supporting a responsible natural resource-based economy through the investment of millions of dollars in job training for a skilled workforce. Particularly

during the last decade, we have witnessed a decline in job opportunities within our region. For this reason, we welcome responsible economic opportunities such as those provided through the proposed PolyMet initiative; and

WHEREAS, the appointed members of the Joint Powers Natural Resources Board declares its support for the existing open, transparent, and comprehensive environmental review and permitting process in place for various nonferrous mining initiatives, including PolyMet's proposed NorthMet mining project, currently planned for development in Northeast Minnesota.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Joint Counties Natural Resources Board supports the success of these projects; for the above stated reasons and believes by meeting Minnesota's strict environmental standards through a comprehensive environmental permitting process, PolyMet will be poised to play a significant role in contributing to the sustainability of our region's economy by mining the metals we need every day without harming our region's air and water quality.