



Our membership and services span the globe

10 N Post St Ste 305 | Spokane WA 99201-0705

Phone: 509.624.1158 | Fax: 509.623.1241

E-mail: nwma_info@nwma.org | Web: www.nwma.org

January 18, 2010

Stuart Arkley, EIS Project Manager
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Ecological Resources
Environmental Review Unit
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

Dear Mr. Arkley:

The Northwest Mining Association (NWMA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on PolyMet Mining's NorthMet Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). On behalf of our members, NWMA expresses strong support for the NorthMet Project. Based on the extensive documentation as outlined in the DEIS, PolyMet clearly has demonstrated it can produce critical metals for our nation while meeting and exceeding Minnesota's strict environmental requirements to protect its air, water and land.

NWMA is a 115 year old, 1,750 member, non-profit, non-partisan trade association based in Spokane, Washington. NWMA members reside in 40 states, including Minnesota, and are actively involved in exploration and mining operations on public and private lands. Our diverse membership includes every facet of the mining industry including geology, exploration, mining, engineering, equipment manufacturing, technical services, and sales of equipment and supplies. NWMA's broad membership represents a true cross-section of the American mining community from small miners and exploration geologists to both junior and large mining companies. More than 90% of our members are small businesses or work for small businesses. Most of our members are individual citizens. PolyMet Mining is one of our corporate members.

PolyMet's NorthMet Project will create a domestic supply of critical minerals and metals needed in every aspect of our daily lives, from medical applications to cell phones and computers. The metals that PolyMet will mine also are essential for renewable and clean energy technologies, such as wind turbines and hybrid cars, which will help the U.S. become more energy independent.

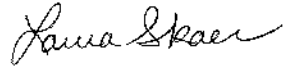
The U.S. can and should be more self-reliant for the minerals and metals we need. Despite reserves of 78 important mined minerals, the United States currently attracts only seven percent of worldwide exploration dollars. As a result, our nation is becoming more dependent upon foreign sources to meet our metal and minerals requirements, even for minerals with adequate domestic sources.

Currently, America is 100 percent dependent on foreign sources for 18 minerals commodities and more than 50 percent import reliant on another 45 commodities. Increased import dependency causes a multitude of negative consequences, including aggravation of the U.S. balance of payments, unpredictable price fluctuations, loss of high paying jobs and vulnerability

to possible supply disruptions. We must not trade a dependence on Middle Eastern oil for an equally unhealthy dependence on foreign sources of minerals.

PolyMet can produce these metals in an environmentally sound manner and create hundreds of stable jobs that will benefit Minnesota families and provide a true economic stimulus to the entire region. We urge you to expeditiously approve the permit for the NorthMet Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Skaer".

Laura Skaer
Executive Director