COVER SHEET

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Polymet Mining, Inc. – NorthMet Mining Project and Land Exchange

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service have jointly prepared the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) to evaluate the proposed project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act 42 USC 4321-4347, and the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act, *Minnesota Statutes*, section 116D.

Abstract:
This SDEIS documents the analysis of potential impacts associated with the proposed NorthMet Mining Project and Land Exchange located in northeastern Minnesota. PolyMet Mining, Inc. is proposing to develop the NorthMet copper-nickel-platinum group elements (PGE) mine and associated processing facilities. Mining would involve open-pit surface mining methods for approximately 20 years. Waste rock with a low potential to react would be stored in a permanent stockpile (capped at closure), while waste rock with a higher potential to react would be stored temporarily in lined stockpiles and ultimately stored subaqueously in the mined pits. Ore would be transported by (existing) railway to a refurbished and modified taconite processing facility for processing. Processing waste would be stored at a Tailings Basin, which would be built on top of an existing Tailings Basin, and a new, lined Hydrometallurgical Residue Facility, which would be built on top of a disturbed area. Water that has contacted surfaces disturbed by mining operations (including the stockpiles) as well as seepage from the Tailings Basin would be captured in containment systems and treated at wastewater treatment facilities located at the Mine and Plant sites. At closure, unnecessary infrastructure would be removed and the sites reclaimed. Monitoring and water treatment would continue until it is no longer required in order to meet environmental standards and permit conditions. The NorthMet Deposit containing copper-nickel-PGE minerals is located on National Forest System lands within the Superior National Forest (SNF). The mineral rights associated with these lands were reserved by the original private owner when the United States purchased the land for National Forest purposes under the authority of the Weeks Act. Those mineral interests remain privately owned and are now controlled by PolyMet. The USFS does not believe that the mineral reservation gives PolyMet a right to surface mine NFS land to access the minerals. In addition, allowing private surface mining would be inconsistent with USFS legal mandates for acquiring and managing these lands. To eliminate this conflict between PolyMet's desire to surface mine and the United States' rights, including the USFS' administration of the NFS land, PolyMet proposed a land exchange with the USFS where it would acquire the NFS land (surface estate) in exchange for currently privately owned lands that would become part of the NFS. The Land Exchange would reunify the severed mineral and surface estates of the NorthMet Deposit. Without this exchange, under the described conditions, the surface mining operation desired by PolyMet would not take place. For this reason, the Land Exchange is a connected action to the NorthMet Project.

Public comment submittal:
The Co-lead Agencies are soliciting public comment on the SDEIS. Comments will become part of the official record and as such, may be made available for public examination. Comments and submittals will not be edited to remove any identifying or contact information; therefore, the Co-lead Agencies caution against using any information that should not be publicly disclosed. Both mailed and emailed submittals will be accepted.

E-mail submittals should be directed to NorthMetSDEIS.dnr@state.mn.us and include a full name and legal mailing address to be considered.

Mailed submittals should be directed to:

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Approved for issuance for public comment:

11/15/13
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11/14/13
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