

# COMMUNITY OF ST. MARTIN

2720 E. 22nd Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55406

## **Community of St Martin Statement** **on the NorthMet Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS)**

We believe that God created our world and much more. We, as humans with the ability to willfully act, reason and choose, have a sacred obligation to nurture, protect and husband this magnificent creation. As we read the SDEIS and comments by experts, media, government officials and others, a consistent nagging question emerges: one of **uncertainty** of the environmental degradation that may result from the NorthMet mine. In addition to the comments by other concerned parties, e.g. Tribal Agencies and the Sierra Club, we have specific questions about:

### **1. Climate Change**

**We are concerned that there exists no substantial evidence or analysis of how climate change, including severe storms, tornados, and downpours can be modeled and anticipated in order to minimize pollution from the mine entering into our water, land and air.**

Although the EPA has recognized climate change and mandated consideration of its effects, the SDEIS is inadequate in considering, analyzing and producing credible science to allay our concerns.

We are concerned that the modeling systems used to predict

- runoff of heavy metals
- acid mine leakage into ground and surface water
- magnitude and frequency of severe storms

are either missing or premised upon climate data of past decades. This past information is insufficient because science has no accurate way of assessing these issues in future decades and centuries.

We remember the flooding in Duluth in 2010 and reports that this was the “storm of the century.” This characterization is typical of the outdated conclusions that concern us. These storms are occurring on a regular basis around the United States, and the reoccurrence may be more accurately termed “storms of the decade” or “storms of the year.” How can we predict the future when it bears little resemblance to the past?

### **2. Financial Assurance**

**We are concerned that the costs of remediation are neither included nor estimated in the SDEIS.**

We are concerned that if the true cost of this mine were known to citizens of the State of Minnesota, it would not be authorized. We have concern that the citizens of the State of Minnesota will bear the burden of remediation. We are additionally concerned that centuries from now, no one will bear the burden of remediation and cleanup, but that the pollution will go unabated.

There appears no end to the water treatment that is necessary as reported in the SDEIS. What will be the state of solvency of sureties and bond companies several decades or even centuries from now? What will be the state of solvency of the State government several decades or centuries from now? Will our nation and economy exist in its present form centuries from now? If we had the answers to these questions, would the Agencies approve of the NorthMet project?

Since none of these crucial questions can be answered, it cannot be said that the Agencies have used all practicable means to determine the risks of this project.

We believe that because of these *uncertainties* in this process, the Agencies should err on the side of caution toward and care of the environment.

So where knowledge is limited, we will remember all those who will walk after us, and err on the side of caution.

In this spirit of caution, we urge that the SDEIS not be approved and being inadequate, unreliable, unsubstantiated and uncertain, that the NorthMet project be deemed too dangerous to our land, air and water, and too expensive for our taxpayers.

### **3. Tribal Agencies**

**We are concerned that the positions of our Native brothers and sisters will not be respected. For far too long Native peoples have lost their lands, homes, means of livelihood, and their very voice to the dominant culture.**

These losses have come in the name of progress and economic necessity. We hear the ring of these same rationales in the SDEIS and stand with and support each and every expressed reservation, objection, and comment raised by the Tribal Agencies to the SDEIS.

Community of St. Martin

By Sara Nelson-Pallmeyer,

President, Community Council

March 4, 2014

The Community of St. Martin, located in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis, was established in the fall of 1984 and describes its vision in the following way:

*We strive to be an ecumenical Christian community. Rooted in Scripture, sharing worship and ministry, we affirm active nonviolence, love of justice and peace, and the integrity of God's creation. Acknowledging our complicity in the materialism and oppression of the dominant culture, we seek to practice loving hospitality and care-filled stewardship of God's gifts of ourselves, land, time and possessions. Through an ongoing process of action and reflection we seek to shape our lives according to our faith and the urgings of the Spirit. We commit ourselves to one another and to the way of Jesus Christ. Our community is open to all who share these values.*