

1 should be crystal clear to all of us that we will be  
2 left to deal with the mess. We cannot trust these  
3 companies to simply do the right thing.

4 Plus, our current political power in  
5 Washington, D.C. and St. Paul is bent on eliminating  
6 environmental regulation and handcuffing our  
7 enforcement agents.

8 Therefore, it would be in everybody's best  
9 interest to approach, wouldn't it, with -- our best  
10 approach would be to let -- never let PolyMet begin  
11 mining in the first place.

12 PolyMet has been preying upon our  
13 desperate workforce by offering them exclusive jobs  
14 like a carrot on a stick. So let's understand fully:  
15 They are only mainly there for profit. Thank you.

16 MARY THOMPSON: Mary Thompson from  
17 Duluth. I cede my time to Virgil.

18 VIRGIL SOHM: Hello. My name is  
19 Virgil Sohm, V-I-R-G-I-L, S-O-H-M, and I'm from Tower,  
20 Minnesota.

21 I'm here to represent seven generations of  
22 our people. I am an enrolled member of the Lake  
23 Superior Band of Ojibwe, and I have great concern for  
24 all of our grandchildren. I want to thank you,  
25 commissioners, representatives, people here with open

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1 will leave believe for them.

2 We can't drink poisoned water. Those  
3 future generations won't be able to drink poisoned  
4 water, and they should not have to pay corporations in  
5 order to have access to this life-sustaining resource.

6 This corporation wants you to believe that  
7 this project is about jobs. This company, with  
8 foreign interests, will close up shop and leave its  
9 mess behind for generations and few jobs. It's time  
10 to say no. I speak for the water. Water is life.  
11 The water sustains us. Mni Wiconi.

12 CHRIS URBAS: I'm Chris Urbas, a  
13 resident of Ely, Minnesota, born and raised. I  
14 support PolyMet, and I defer my time to Tony Kwilas.

15 TONY KWILAS: Good evening. My name  
16 is Tony Kwilas, K-W-I-L-A-S, and I am the director of  
17 environmental policy at the Minnesota Chamber of  
18 Commerce.

19 First of all, I'd like to thank the  
20 Department of Natural Resources and the Pollution  
21 Control Agency for having this consolidated draft  
22 public hearing on the draft permit to mine, the draft  
23 air permit, the draft water -- or NPDES permit -- and  
24 the 401 certification.

25 Because this is the perfect example of one

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1 hearts that are listening. We need to hear the truth.

2 We need to get away from scientists that  
3 are leading us down a scorched path. When I go up to  
4 Lake Vermillion, when I go up to our land at Net Lake,  
5 which is a prime ricing lake, I know that our  
6 grandfathers are continuing to watch over us, and they  
7 will continue to be here with us.

8 We do not need a toxic environment. We  
9 need good wild rice, we need to be able to hunt moose,  
10 our wolves need land to live on.

11 I've driven by your PolyMet site many  
12 times, and I know the area. I know the way that the  
13 rivers flow through there and the creeks, and you do  
14 not have permission to have that water to flush out  
15 some crud that's in the ore and throw away 99 percent  
16 of it. Miigwech.

17 RACHEL BURROUGHS: Hello. I'm  
18 Rachel Burroughs from Duluth.

19 I'm here tonight as a Duluth resident to  
20 speak for the protection of the water, to speak out  
21 against corporations and colonialism, even when I've  
22 benefited from it.

23 In the land of 10,000 lakes, we do not  
24 often think about water scarcity, but I think about  
25 seven generations and beyond, the world that we

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1 of the efficiencies that the chamber has been asking  
2 for: Instead of having four separate public hearings,  
3 to have one consolidated hearing, and we thank you for  
4 listening to us and having -- this is one, just,  
5 perfect example of when we think of efficiency in the  
6 system.

7 Second of all, I'd like to thank you for  
8 having multiple public hearings, which you didn't have  
9 to do, and went above and beyond what was required in  
10 state law. But we thank you for doing that, and  
11 especially having it in the region where the proposed  
12 project is located. Hearing from stakeholders that  
13 have daily interactions with this proposed project is  
14 invaluable.

15 The environmental review and environmental  
16 permitting process has been adhered to by state  
17 statute and rule. Some say, along with the chamber,  
18 that it's taken too long and cost too much, but no one  
19 can argue that this process has not been followed and  
20 closely adhered to.

21 We have a tremendous opportunity before us  
22 to develop a world-class resource, the NorthMet ore  
23 body, and in turn, capitalize on one of the largest  
24 economic development project proposals in this state  
25 in recent years, all the while protecting the great

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1 natural resources that we all enjoy.  
 2 The economic impact to this project is  
 3 invaluable and could create over 600 construction jobs  
 4 and 360 permanent jobs at the facility. There will be  
 5 numerous auxilliary benefits also to local cities,  
 6 counties, school districts, businesses, as well as to  
 7 the state of Minnesota.

8 In regards to the four permits -- on the  
 9 permit to mine, I'd like to thank the Department of  
 10 Natural Resources, Commissioner Landwehr and Assistant  
 11 Commissioner Naramore, for your staff for putting  
 12 together this document. I know it was no easy task.

13 But the most important part of that permit  
 14 to mine is the financial assurance provision. The  
 15 financial assurance provisions ensure that the state  
 16 of Minnesota will be protected from the process when  
 17 the facilities and the mine are properly closed and  
 18 maintained. It is important to note that this  
 19 provision could be revisited yearly and adjusted by  
 20 the State.

21 In regards to the draft air permit, the  
 22 company has set -- has met all the details required by  
 23 the draft air permit. The potential emissions are  
 24 identified and have set limits on those and they are  
 25 legally enforceable.

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1 How much was hushed to get us to this day?  
 2 How far would be the breaking point for you? Contort  
 3 the draft and with it science lay. Whatever reason  
 4 facts tell us to do.

5 You do your job but still reach to sleep  
 6 fair, so keep the struggles with all laws concealed.  
 7 Deep dives minutia of design and their false sense of  
 8 calm kill qualms about the real.

9 But what alone soft voice resolved could  
 10 say? No model holds the world and all its flaws. The  
 11 thought of ground you stood and lives you changed be  
 12 foremost on your mind retirement day.

13 Before you lies a whistle and our home.  
 14 Our eyes ask: Who has the courage to say no? Thank  
 15 you.

16 CINDY WHITING: My name is  
 17 Cindy Whiting, and I'm here to do what I can to  
 18 protect our clean water.

19 I would like all of you to think for a  
 20 moment where any of us would be, jobs or not, without  
 21 our clean water. I would -- and that goes to the  
 22 risk, Representative Tom Bakk. Where would you be  
 23 without clean water? And if there's any further  
 24 question on that, any of us could ask Cape Town, South  
 25 Africa.

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1 On the draft water quality permit, or the  
 2 NPDES permit, we thank you for establishing the  
 3 specific limits and protection of surface and  
 4 groundwater. But in the end, it is clear that the  
 5 process established by the State --

6 EMILY NORTON: My name is  
 7 Emily Norton. I'm a citizen of Duluth, and I'm out  
 8 here asking the DNR to oppose the permits to mine, all  
 9 the things the scientists have said.

10 What's at stake here, from a DNR  
 11 standpoint, is the pristine wilderness that we want to  
 12 preserve, and I don't think we will regret preserving  
 13 the wilderness, but we're probably going to regret the  
 14 mine.

15 I would like to defer the rest of my time  
 16 to Bridget Holcomb, who will speak for Duluth for  
 17 Clean Water. Thank you.

18 BRIDGET HOLCOMB: My name is  
 19 Bridget Holcomb, B-R-I-D-G-E-T, H-O-L-C-O-M-B. I'm  
 20 from Duluth.

21 This is my first sonnet, and I think it's  
 22 appropriate that I wrote my first sonnet for public  
 23 servants, and I recognize that these public servants  
 24 have enough flex in the law. You can make this  
 25 decision either way.

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1 I've been at this for a while and I would  
 2 like, and encourage everyone, to go online and Google  
 3 some of the destruction that has happened by sulfide  
 4 mining in Canada. You will be astounded.

5 Please, please do not allow this  
 6 permitting to go forward. Clean water.

7 I defer the rest of my time to Kevin Lee.

8 KEVIN LEE: Thank you. My name is  
 9 Kevin Lee. The last name is L-E-E.

10 I've heard a lot today about this project  
 11 complying with the highest standards in the world, so  
 12 I'd like to talk about that for just a moment.

13 In 2015, there was a panel of expert mine  
 14 engineers that issued a report that outlined how we  
 15 can learn from the mistakes of the past. Most of the  
 16 mining industry listened. PolyMet and Glencore have  
 17 not.

18 The first item on this expert's list:  
 19 Don't store mine waste with water, but PolyMet won't  
 20 listen. They want a permit to create a mine waste  
 21 lake 900 acres large, 250 feet in the air, and keep it  
 22 there forever.

23 The Mining Association of Canada, an  
 24 industry trade group, now requires its members to have  
 25 their mining practices audited by outside experts.

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