PolyMet's NorthMet Mining Project Update

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

August 2, 2016

Background

- State environmental impact statement process concluded on March 3, 2016, allowing PolyMet to submit applications for permits.
- PolyMet would need several permits from the MPCA to authorize construction, including permits covering air quality, wastewater/water quality (NPDES/SDS), construction stormwater and 401 certification (wetlands).

Current Status

Permitting

- Water quality permit application submitted by PolyMet on July 11, 2016.
    - Application deemed complete for processing on August 2, 2016.
- 401 certification application submitted by PolyMet on August 2, 2016.
    - Preliminary discussions between MPCA staff, PolyMet, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Minnesota DNR were held to aid PolyMet in the preparation of the application – MPCA staff will continue to coordinate with involved agencies during the certification process.
- Air quality permit pre-application work to aid PolyMet in the preparation of the permit application continues.
    - Air modeling protocols must be submitted, reviewed and approved in order for an application (which contains modeling results) to be submitted. Several protocols have been submitted and are under review by the MPCA

Next steps

Permitting

- MPCA staff will now proceed with technical review of the application leading to the development of draft permit requirements. Per our usual practice, MPCA will also start regular interactions with US EPA Region V water permitting staff.
- We anticipate PolyMet will submit the air quality permit application later this summer.
- The timeline(s) for processing the applications remains unknown; it depends partly on the quality of information in the applications as well as the degree of interaction with the public, EPA and the Tribes.
- The permitting process has opportunities for public input. This will include a formal public notice of the permits and more than likely a public meeting. There are also opportunities for legal challenges following public notice and following permit issuance (if issuance occurs), and we expect those to occur.
- There are important connections between the different permits requiring state and federal agencies to coordinate closely throughout the permitting process. For example, certain aspects of the MPCA water quality permit and the DNR permit to mine inform each other, requiring processing of the two permits to be closely linked.

Public Engagement

- We will make extensive use of the GovDelivery email list, the state web portal ([HYPERLINK "http://polymet.mn.gov"]) and the MPCA website ([HYPERLINK "https://www.pca.state.mn.us/northmet"]) to ensure the public has timely access to MPCA permitting information, understands each permitting process and knows when there are opportunities for public engagement.