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GREAT LAKES DESERVE GREAT PROTECTION

Minnesota is the headwaters state for the Great Lakes, counting 190 miles of rugged Lake Superior coastline among its natural assets. The North Shore contains 246 trout streams and eight state parks. While Minnesota's Great Lake is widely viewed as the cleanest of the five Great Lakes, it can also be considered the most threatened.

SAFEGUARDING THE GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE

The Great Lakes region's business leaders, mayors, governors, tribes and conservation and environmental communities have worked together since 2005 to implement a science-based plan of action known as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLRI is a long-term regional plan to protect and restore the Great Lakes while stimulating the region's economy. The first six years of funding provided Great Lakes projects in Minnesota with an estimated \$45 million in federal grants, with an emphasis on the St. Louis River estuary.

The GLRI has also funded North Shore trout stream restoration, research on ballast water treatment and support for tribal engagement. The North Shore's famed Poplar River is on the brink of celebrating successful clean-up of their long-term water turbidity problems.

SUPPORT STATE MATCHING FUNDS FOR LAKE SUPERIOR

The GLRI has been a powerful tool to address our state's restoration needs. Minnesotans help lead the way by supporting full Congressional funding. An unprecedented action plan maps out nearly 60 actions to restore the St. Louis River by 2025.

- ▶ Here at home, we must take advantage of the federal funding by leveraging state dollars, including funds from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment and the 2016 Bonding Bill. A current critical priority is securing the \$12.7 million requested by the MPCA in 2016 and 2018 to remove polluted riverbed sediment from the St. Louis River estuary. These funds will be matched by \$47.2 million in federal funds.

OTHER PRIORITY ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF LAKE SUPERIOR

- ▶ Maintain strong standards to protect the St. Louis River from new water quality threats, including pollution from proposed sulfide mines.
- ▶ Finish the long-delayed St. Louis River mercury clean-up plan.
- ▶ Protect the integrity of the Great Lakes-Saint Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, by carefully evaluating the proposed Great Lakes diversion at Waukesha, Wisconsin, and acting to uphold the Compact criteria.
- ▶ Work with our allies to reduce the threat of spills from oil transport by pipeline and tanker.

SULFIDE MINING THREATENS OUR CLEAN WATER

Proposed sulfide mines in Northeast Minnesota, such as the PolyMet NorthMet project and the Twin Metals Minnesota project, threaten our lakes and rivers with significant ongoing water pollution. PolyMet's own data show that ongoing water treatment would be required long after the mining stops – for 500 years or more.

No operation of this type is known to have operated and closed without polluting nearby lakes, rivers, or groundwater. The proposed sulfide mining areas drain into the St. Louis River and Lake Superior or the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park. PolyMet relies on out-of-date, bargain basement technology, including the practice of storing tailings mixed with water in a basin much like the one that collapsed at Mt. Polley in 2014. The PolyMet proposal doesn't meet modern standards and should not be approved.

The technology to fully protect our clean water for future generations does not exist. Even the most advanced water treatment does no good if water can't be captured to be treated. Sulfate from mining has been shown, by science recently funded by the Legislature, to affect the entire ecosystem.

Sulfide mining in a water-rich environment like Minnesota is a high-risk gamble. We need to protect our water, our families' health, our wildlife and taxpayer resources from pollution and harm caused by sulfide mining.

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