



LOCAL 6115

January 16th 2026

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 5515

RE: Mesabi Metallics Wastewater, Air, and Permit Amendment on Water Quality Certification.

Dear Commissioner Kessler,

My name is Al King, and I am the President of United Steelworkers Local 6115. Our local union represents the members who operate and maintain Cleveland-Cliffs' Minorca Mine in Virginia, Minnesota. Through this role, I bring a unique perspective on the mining of iron ore, the production of pellets for furnace destinations, and the regulatory framework that governs this work. I also have firsthand insight into the effects mining has on our communities and environment, as well as the severe consequences communities face when mining operations cease and local economies are disrupted.

While all aspects of mining should be thoroughly examined and discussed with all stakeholders involved, I believe the necessity of responsible American mining is undeniable. This comment is submitted in support of all three Mesabi Metallics permits currently within the public notice period.

First, I would like to acknowledge that Mesabi Metallics has done an exceptional job informing and engaging the community regarding its plans and the progress of mine construction. The company has gone above and beyond in its efforts to remain transparent with stakeholders across greater Minnesota, including—but not limited to—tribal governments, local businesses, and surrounding communities. Mesabi Metallics has hosted numerous open houses, welcoming both supporters and critics of mining to ask questions and express concerns. They have demonstrated what it means to be a responsible community partner, and they have set a standard I hope all mining operations will follow.

Second, I firmly believe that the mining activities proposed by Mesabi Metallics will be conducted using state-of-the-art equipment and operated by highly skilled, potentially unionized workers from this region. These workers are deeply invested in mining ore efficiently and responsibly while protecting the environment we all depend on. The regulatory requirements outlined in these permits, combined with strong oversight from trained union workers and a transparent, cooperative company, provide confidence that Mesabi Metallics will operate this new state asset in a safe, proficient, and environmentally conscious manner. I urge you to recognize the extensive effort Mesabi Metallics has made to comply with the permitting process and to approve all three permits in a timely manner. The community is eager to welcome and celebrate the opening of the first new iron ore mine in Minnesota in nearly 50 years.

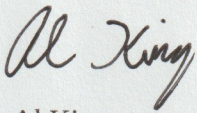
Finally, I want to emphasize the critical economic importance of Mesabi Metallics to Northern Minnesota and the Iron Range. Currently, two Minnesota mines are experiencing layoffs and uncertainty. Minorca Mine, where my members work, has been indefinitely idled for nearly a year, and Hibbing Taconite has experienced multiple rounds of layoffs while also facing a diminishing supply of permitted ore. Both operations are owned and operated by Cleveland-Cliffs.

This uncertainty has placed the Iron Range in an extremely precarious position. If Hibbing Taconite exhausts its permitted ore, remaining employees will be permanently displaced. At Minorca, we have received minimal information about the future, leaving workers and their families to speculate whether operations will ever resume. If this situation continues, many skilled miners may be forced to leave the region entirely to find work elsewhere.

The approval of these permits for Mesabi Metallics directly affects this reality. A fully permitted and operational Mesabi Metallics mine would provide displaced workers with an opportunity to remain in their communities, working in a profession that has supported generations of Iron Range families. Approving these permits would stabilize our local economy, provide good-paying union jobs, and deliver much-needed hope and security during a time of unprecedented uncertainty.

I respectfully urge the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to approve all permits currently under consideration and to do so promptly. This action would allow Mesabi Metallics to continue building on its strong community relationships, complete construction safely and efficiently, and begin mining operations that will benefit displaced workers, local communities, and the Iron Range as a whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Al King". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Al King
President, United Steelworkers Local 6115