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State of Minnesota  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION

H. F. No. 2642

03/05/2012 Authored by Hausman; Murphy, E.; Greiling; Johnson; Davnie and others

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Policy and Finance

1.1 A bill for an act  
1.2 relating to natural resources; providing for financial assurance for nonferrous  
1.3 metallic mineral mining; amending Minnesota Statutes 2010, sections 93.481,  
1.4 subdivision 1, by adding a subdivision; 93.49; proposing coding for new law in  
1.5 Minnesota Statutes, chapter 93.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 93.481, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.8 Subdivision 1. **Prohibition against mining without permit; application for**  
1.9 **permit.** Except as provided in this subdivision, after June 30, 1975, no person shall  
1.10 engage in or carry out a mining operation for metallic minerals within the state unless the  
1.11 person has first obtained a permit to mine from the commissioner. Any person engaging  
1.12 in or carrying out a mining operation as of the effective date of the rules adopted under  
1.13 section 93.47 shall apply for a permit to mine within 180 days after the effective date of  
1.14 such rules. Any such existing mining operation may continue during the pendency of the  
1.15 application for the permit to mine. The person applying for a permit shall apply on forms  
1.16 prescribed by the commissioner and shall submit such information as the commissioner  
1.17 may require, including but not limited to the following:

1.18 (1) a proposed plan for the reclamation or restoration, or both, of any mining area  
1.19 affected by mining operations to be conducted on and after the date on which permits  
1.20 are required for mining under this section;

1.21 (2) a certificate issued by an insurance company authorized to do business in the  
1.22 United States that the applicant has a public liability insurance policy in force for the  
1.23 mining operation for which the permit is sought, or evidence that the applicant has  
1.24 satisfied other state or federal self-insurance requirements, to provide personal injury  
1.25 and property damage protection in an amount adequate to compensate any persons who

might be damaged as a result of the mining operation or any reclamation or restoration operations connected with the mining operation;

(3) an application fee of:

(i) \$25,000 for a permit to mine for a taconite mining operation;

(ii) \$50,000 for a permit to mine for a nonferrous metallic minerals operation;

(iii) \$10,000 for a permit to mine for a scam mining operation; or

(iv) \$5,000 for a permit to mine for a peat operation;

(4) ~~a bond which may be~~ financial assurance as required pursuant to ~~under~~ section 93.49 ~~or 93.491~~; and

(5) a copy of the applicant's advertisement of the ownership, location, and boundaries of the proposed mining area and reclamation or restoration operations, which advertisement shall be published in a legal newspaper in the locality of the proposed site at least once a week for four successive weeks before the application is filed, except that if the application is for a permit to conduct lean ore stockpile removal the advertisement need be published only once.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 93.481, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 8. **Responsible persons.** For purposes of nonferrous mining operations, the permittee and any person who manages, directs, or conducts operations under this section, including a parent entity or affiliate who materially participates in that management, direction, or conduct of operations, is responsible for complying with sections 93.44 to 93.51, rules adopted under those sections, and any permit conditions required by those sections or rules.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 93.49, is amended to read:

**93.49 FINANCIAL ASSURANCE OF OPERATOR; FERROUS MINING.**

The commissioner shall require ~~a bond or other security or other~~ financial assurance satisfactory to the commissioner from an operator of a ferrous mine. The commissioner shall review annually the extent of each ferrous mine operator's financial assurance under this section.

**Sec. 4. [93.491] FINANCIAL ASSURANCE OF OPERATOR; NONFERROUS MINING.**

Subdivision 1. **Financial assurance required.** As a condition for issuing a permit to mine, the commissioner of natural resources shall require financial assurance from a

nonferrous mine operator sufficient to cover the reasonably estimated costs of contracting with a third party for closure, corrective action, reclamation, and postclosure maintenance. When determining the amount of financial assurance, the commissioner shall consult with the commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency and with individuals with documented experience and expertise in nonferrous mining reclamation and water treatment.

Subd. 2. **Long-term water treatment costs.** The financial assurance shall include the reasonably estimated costs of constructing, operating, and maintaining any water treatment facilities that may be needed as a result of the mining activity to ensure compliance with federal and state environmental requirements after mining ceases.

Subd. 3. **Form of financial assurance.** The financial assurance shall be in a form the commissioner of management and budget determines will adequately protect the state's taxpayers if a nonferrous mine operator or other responsible person defaults on the permit obligations. The commissioner of management and budget may not accept the following as financial assurance under this section: corporate guarantees, self-insurance, financial tests, captive insurance, or any other form the commissioner of management and budget determines may become unavailable to the state if the nonferrous mining operator or other responsible person defaults on the permit obligations.

Subd. 4. **Release of financial assurance.** (a) Before the release of any amount of the financial assurance to the permittee of a nonferrous mining operation, the commissioner of natural resources shall publish a notice of the action in the State Register and the Environmental Quality Board Monitor.

(b) The portion of the financial assurance attributable to the estimated cost of water treatment shall not be released until the discharge has ceased for a period of five years, as determined by ongoing monitoring and testing, or, if the discharge is continuous, until the operator has met all applicable effluent limitations and water quality standards without treatment for five consecutive years following closure of the mine.

(c) Written objections to the commissioner's financial assurance release decision may be filed with the commissioner no later than 30 days following the publication required under paragraph (a). Within ten days after the final day for filing written objections, the commissioner shall determine whether there is a reasonable basis for holding a hearing that would allow the presentation or introduction of information that would aid the commissioner in making a final determination on whether to release all or part of the financial assurance. If the commissioner concludes that any of the objections meet those requirements, the commissioner shall commence a contested case under the contested case procedures adopted by the Office of Administrative Hearings.

4.1            Subd. 5. **Treatment of financial assurance in environmental review process.** The  
4.2 commissioner of natural resources or other responsible government unit shall include an  
4.3 analysis and estimate of the financial assurance that would be required for each alternative  
4.4 in any draft or final environmental impact statement for a nonferrous mining operation.  
4.5 The analysis shall include an adequate discussion of reasonably foreseeable best-case,  
4.6 worst-case, and most likely scenarios from an environmental perspective.