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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETIETH SESSION

H. F. No. 3089

02/26/2018 Authored by Metsa and Lueck
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to mines; modifying inspection requirements; amending Minnesota Statutes
1.3 2016, sections 180.015, subdivision 2; 180.03, subdivisions 2, 3, 4; 180.10.

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

1.5 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 180.015, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

1.6 Subd. 2. **Mine inspector.** "Mine inspector" or "inspector of mines" means the person
1.7 designated by the county as the county mine inspector, and includes any assistant mine
1.8 inspectors and agents.

1.9 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 180.03, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

1.10 Subd. 2. **Fences.** Every person, firm, or corporation that is or has been engaged in the
1.11 business of mining or removing iron ore, taconite, semitaconite or other minerals except
1.12 sand, crushed rock, and gravel shall erect and maintain, as a minimum, a three strand wire
1.13 fence along the outside perimeter of the excavation, open pit, or shaft of any mine in which
1.14 mining operations have ceased for a period of six consecutive months or longer. Based upon
1.15 local site conditions that may exist at shafts, caves, or open pits, the county mine inspector
1.16 may require more secure fencing such as barbed wire or mesh fence, or may require barriers,
1.17 appropriate signs, or any combination of the above, to reduce the possibility of accidental
1.18 falls. The county mine inspector may grant exemptions under subdivision 4. Where mining
1.19 operations have ceased and not resumed, the fence, barrier, signs, or combination of them
1.20 required by this section shall be erected within two years from the date when the county
1.21 mine inspector directs the erection of fences, barriers, signs, or combination of them.

2.1 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 180.03, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

2.2 Subd. 3. **Abandoned mines.** Except as described in subdivision 4, when a mine is idle
 2.3 or abandoned it is the duty of the inspector of mines to notify the person, firm, or corporation
 2.4 that is or has been engaged in the business of mining to erect and maintain around all the
 2.5 shafts, caves, and open pits of such mines a fence, barrier, appropriate signs, or combination
 2.6 of them, suitable to warn of the presence of shafts, caves, or open pits and reduce the
 2.7 possibility of accidentally falling into these shafts, caves, or open pits. If the mine has been
 2.8 idled or abandoned, or if the person, firm, or corporation that has been engaged in the
 2.9 business of mining no longer exists, the fee owner shall erect and maintain the fence, barrier,
 2.10 or signs required by this section. If the fee owner fails to act, the county in which the mining
 2.11 operation is located may, in addition to any other remedies available, abate the nuisance by
 2.12 erecting or maintaining the fence, barrier, or signs and assessing the costs and related
 2.13 expenses pursuant to section 429.101.

2.14 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 180.03, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

2.15 Subd. 4. **Exemptions.** (a) The portion of an excavation, cave, open or water-filled pit,
 2.16 or shaft is exempt from the requirements of this section if:

2.17 (1) it is located on property owned, leased, or administered by the Office of the
 2.18 Commissioner of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation;

2.19 (2) it is for the construction, operation, maintenance, or administration of:

2.20 (i) grants-in-aid trails as defined in section 85.018;

2.21 (ii) property owned or leased by a municipality, as defined in section 466.01, subdivision
 2.22 1, that is intended or permitted to be used as a park, an open area for recreational purposes,
 2.23 or for the provision of recreational services, including the creation of trails or paths without
 2.24 artificial surfaces; or

2.25 (iii) recreational use, as defined in section 604A.21, subdivisions 5 and 6, provided the
 2.26 use is administered by a municipality, as defined in section 466.01, subdivision 1;

2.27 (3) it is for economic development purposes under chapter 469; or

2.28 (4) upon written application by the property owner, the county mine inspector ~~may~~
 2.29 ~~exempt from the requirements of subdivision 2, any abandoned excavation, open pit, or~~
 2.30 ~~shaft which~~ determines that it is provided with fencing, barriers, appropriate signs, or
 2.31 combinations of them, in a manner that is reasonably similar to the standards in subdivision
 2.32 2, or which if, in the inspector's judgment, it does not constitute a safety hazard.

3.1 (b) Where an exemption applies, there shall be, at a minimum, appropriate signs posted
3.2 by the recipient of the exemption consistent with section 97B.001, subdivision 4:

3.3 (1) at each location of public access to the mining area restricting access to designated
3.4 areas and warning of possible dangers due to the presence of excavations, shafts, caves, or
3.5 open or water-filled pits;

3.6 (2) prohibiting public access beyond the boundaries of the designated public access area;
3.7 and

3.8 (3) identifying those areas where the property on which public access is allowed abuts
3.9 private property.

3.10 (c) Where an exemption applies, to reduce the possibility of inadvertent access beyond
3.11 the boundaries of the designated public access area, any new fencing erected by the recipient
3.12 of the exemption in accordance with subdivision 2 or 3 shall be maintained by the recipient
3.13 of the exemption.

3.14 (d) Notwithstanding section 180.10, limited openings in preexisting fencing may be
3.15 created and maintained by the recipient of the exemption or its agent to provide public
3.16 access to the designated public access area.

3.17 (e) The county mine inspector has the authority to enter, examine, and inspect any and
3.18 all property exempted under this section at all reasonable times by day or by night, and, in
3.19 addition to enforcing the provisions of this chapter, may make recommendations regarding
3.20 the erection of fences, barriers, signs, or a combination of them.

3.21 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 180.10, is amended to read:

3.22 **180.10 REMOVAL OF FENCE; GUARD.**

3.23 A worker, employee, or other person who opens, removes, or disturbs any fence, guard,
3.24 barrier, sign, or rail required by section 180.03 and fails to close or replace or have the same
3.25 closed or replaced again around or in front of any mine shaft, pit, chute, excavation, cave,
3.26 or land liable to cave, injure, or destroy, whether by accident, injury, or damage results,
3.27 either to the mine or those at work therein, or to any other person, shall be guilty of a
3.28 misdemeanor. A worker, employee, or other person who, in regard to any fence, guard,
3.29 barrier, sign, or rail, does any of the acts prohibited by section 609.52, commits theft of the
3.30 fence, guard, barrier, sign, or rail may be sentenced as provided in section 609.52.