



[Legislator]:

Thank you for your work to protect Minnesota's environment. The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) has been at the center of debates about climate change, clean energy, and mining for much of our history. We see the complex global connections between climate action and mining harms, which is why we joined a delegation to Honduras last year with the human rights organization Witness for Peace. We write to invite you to read our attached report about the experience entitled, "We are Connected."

Here in Minnesota, you have likely heard the suggestion that, because of the use of certain metals for low- or zero-carbon technology, and because of the nature of labor and environmental standards here as compared to other places, we have an almost moral duty to encourage more mining even at the expense of our clean water and carbon sequestering wetlands and forests. You have likely seen how some advocates and legislators have even deployed the very real struggles of communities across the globe to promote extractive projects here.

It is interesting when one has these same conversations outside of our state borders. When we share that the mining industry says that it should be permitted here in part because of the ills of the very same industry elsewhere, the reaction approaches befuddlement. How does one answer an industry who puts forward its own sins in one place as justification for permitting additional harms in another? The industry's frame, not surprisingly, assumes one thing only -- more mining. It does not consider examining our consumption habits, it does not consider standards, and it does not consider alternatives.

If our interest as a state is in a genuine conversation that serves communities everywhere, we will not get there through a hackneyed consideration of the issues. A more appropriate conversation, to us, would center options that reduce environmental degradation, like: engaging options to source materials differently (recycling, diversion, etc), reducing waste and consumption generally, and improving standards everywhere. Critically, it would include examining the global record of the transnational owners of Minnesota mining proposals, and listening to the very communities and countries we claim to prioritize.

We thank you for your interest in the international aspects of the mining conversation here in Minnesota and invite you to join us in considering these issues more deeply. We hope that this report helps us move towards a better conversation that includes how we can act in solidarity with communities affected by mining pollution worldwide. We'd love to talk with you further about what we've learned through this delegation. Please let us know if you'd like to meet.

Thank you,

Kathryn Hoffman, CEO
JT Haines, Northeastern Minnesota Program Director