



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



STEVEN E. CHESTER
DIRECTOR

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Contact: Robert McCann
(517) 241-7397

DEQ Announces Decision on Kennecott Mine

The Department of Environmental Quality announced today its decision to approve a series of permits to the Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company to conduct mining operations at the proposed Eagle Project Mine near Marquette. The department's decision follows a period of extensive review by the DEQ of public comments and supporting information to determine whether Kennecott's proposal met the strict standards contained within Michigan's air quality, groundwater, and mining laws. The DEQ is required to make its decision based solely on whether a proposal meets those standards.

"This has been one of the most thorough reviews of an application ever done by this agency," said DEQ Director Steven E. Chester. "In the end, Kennecott's proposal met the high standard set by Michigan's environmental laws."

This project is the first to be subject to Michigan's new Nonferrous Metallic Mineral Mining rules that were enacted in response to concerns over potential environmental impacts from mining of metallic sulfide ores. The rules, among the most stringent in the nation, were drafted and agreed to by a multi-stakeholder work group that included representatives from environmental, business, and mining organizations.

Director Chester noted that information received during the public comment period resulted in a number of changes to Kennecott's permits to alleviate concerns that were expressed by the public and ensure that Michigan's resources are protected.

“We have made every effort to address the public’s concerns within the limits of what the law allows,” said Director Chester. “We must now remain vigilant in ensuring that Kennecott complies with its permits and lives up to its end of the bargain in keeping Michigan’s environment safe.”

Examples of changes made to the permits during the public comment period include:

- Limiting the mining activities to elevations below 327.5 meters to address concerns about the stability of the mine. Mining will only be allowed above that level when approved in writing by the DEQ based on further field investigations and analysis to be conducted by Kennecott.
- Requiring annual certification that the rock stability is sufficient and providing for immediate work stoppage and notification to the DEQ if stability is questionable.
- A requirement for a filter system in the mine shaft ventilation stack that will result in a significant decrease in particulate matter emissions.
- A comprehensive fugitive dust plan.
- Setting maximum daily limits for all groundwater parameters, and increased monitoring requirements.

Kennecott must still acquire a surface use lease from the Department of Natural Resources for the project.

A list of all permit changes and supporting information can be found on the DEQ website at www.michigan.gov/deq, then click on Kennecott Eagle Project.

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Editor's note: DEQ news releases are available on the department's Internet home page at www.michigan.gov/deq.

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