

United States

REGION 5

Environmental Protection

77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD

Agency

CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

PUBLIC NOTICE

ArcelorMittal Minorca Mine Inc.
5950 Old Highway 53
Virginia, MN 55792

Case Docket No. CWA-05-2015-0010



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 5, is providing this notice of its intent to file a Proposed Consent Agreement and Proposed Final Order (Proposed CAFO) against ArcelorMittal Minorca Mine Inc. (Respondent) for violations of Section 301 of the Clean Water Act. This Proposed CAFO will settle alleged violations at the ArcelorMittal Minorca mine in St. Louis County, Minnesota. The Respondent discharged fill and/or dredge material without a permit to wetlands adjacent to tributaries of the Pike River at its taconite mine in Virginia, Minnesota.

EPA first alleged that on May 5, 2007, the ACOE issued to Respondent a permit authorizing, among other things, the filling of certain designated wetlands in connection with the construction of a haul road between East Pit #1 and East Pit #2 (the "Permit"). During calendar year 2012, and on various dates and times during calendar year 2012, ArcelorMittal discharged dredged and fill material into 1.98 acres of wetlands that were not authorized by the Permit to be filled, for the construction of a haul road between East Pit# 1 and East Pit #2. Mechanized land moving equipment was used to facilitate construction of this road.

Next, EPA alleged that on May 19, 2013, a pipeline coupling failure occurred at a location between the ArcelorMittal plant site and the upland tailings basin. Approximately 87,800 cubic feet of mine tailings were released into the pipeline tailings system and adjacent wetlands. 2.66 acres of wetland were filled with mine tailings.

Finally, EPA alleged that on July 30, 2013, a section of the tailings pipeline between the ArcelorMittal plant site and the upland tailings basin developed a hole. Approximately 46,000 cubic feet of mine tailings were released into the pipeline corridor and adjacent wetlands. 0.9 acres of wetlands were filled with mine tailings.

The alleged violations are of environmental significance because the activities resulted in a loss of aquatic habitat, reduced floodwater retention, decreased water quality, and negatively affected

the biological integrity and biodiversity of the impacted watersheds. EPA and Respondent have agreed in principle that the Respondent will pay a civil penalty of \$177,500 to resolve these violations.

A copy of the Proposed CAFO may be viewed on-line at: <http://www.epa.gov/region5/publicnotices/index.htm> by clicking on the complaint (PDF) link at the Public Notices home page for the docket number identified above. Alternatively, the complaint may be received by contacting the Regional Hearing Clerk at the address listed below.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENT: Section 309(g) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. §1319(g) requires that interested persons be given notice of the proposed penalty and a reasonable opportunity to comment on it.

Any person who wishes to comment on this proposed CAFO may submit written comments, may attend or present evidence at any hearing scheduled on this matter, or both, by following the procedures in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 22, Section 45 (40 C.F.R. 22.45), particularly subpart (C) *Comment by a person who is not a party*. This portion of the code of federal regulations may be accessed at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/retrieve.html>. A link to this site is also available at <http://www.epa.gov/region5/publicnotices/index.htm>, which is the site at which this notice and the associated complaint are also posted. The link is entitled "View 40 CFR Part 22.45". You may also wish to review 40 C.F.R. Part 22 to learn more about the procedures and rules of practice governing the administrative assessment of civil penalties.

Comments should be made in writing to the Regional Hearing Clerk at:

Docket No. CWA-05-2015-0010
Regional Hearing Clerk
Mail Code R-19J
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Written comments may be submitted to the Regional Hearing Clerk electronically, by mail, or by delivery to the Clerk's address above. Your comments should include the case name, docket number, and your complete mailing address. If you plan to use FAX or a messenger service to deliver your comments or other documents, please call the Regional Hearing Clerk at (312) 886-3713 for further instructions to insure delivery.

To submit comments electronically, go to the website: <http://epa.gov/region5/publicnotices/>, click the "Submit a Comment Online" phrase in the first paragraph, and complete the blanks. Note that the Agency requires your regular mailing address, since we must use the U.S. Postal Service should we need to reply, request additional information or notify you of a hearing. If you wish to include any kind of attachments with your comment, please mail them instead to the

Regional Hearing Clerk in hard copy (with a copy of the e-mail), so that we are certain to receive your documents in an unaltered, complete, and readable form.

Regardless of how you submit them **all written comments must be received in the Regional Hearing Clerk's Office no later than 4:30 p.m., Central Time, of the Comment Period End Date shown on the Public Notices home page for this docket number: CWA-05-2015-0010**
<http://www.epa.gov/region5/publicnotices/index.htm>

Comments and documents sent to any EPA employee other than the Regional Hearing Clerk are not assured of consideration in this matter.

All documents filed in this proceeding (including documents submitted by the respondent or by public commenters) are available for public inspection by appointment only between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at the EPA Regional Office. An appointment for such an inspection may be made by calling (312) 886-3713 or by writing the Regional Hearing Clerk at the address above.

If this Proposed CAFO is filed in its present form, no hearing will be held in this matter. If a hearing is held, we will advise commenters who (during the public comment period) submitted a written request to participate in a hearing of the date, time, and place of the hearing, which they may attend and present evidence on the appropriateness of the proposed penalty assessment by following the instructions in 40 C.F.R. 22.45(c)(1).

EPA will send a copy of the Consent Agreement and Proposed Final Order assessing a penalty to any persons who submitted written comments or attended a hearing, provided they give us their current mailing address.

Only persons who during the comment period submit written comments or ask to participate in any hearing held in this matter preserve a right to petition the Regional Administrator to set aside the Consent Agreement and Proposed Final Order on the basis that material evidence was not considered, as described in 40 C.F.R. 22.45(c)(4).