

# Readers Write: PolyMet mine, downtown Minneapolis safety, parking rules, Trump's wall

PolyMet's tailings design is banned in Brazil, but fine for us?

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I'm not a lawyer, nor am I someone who regularly attends state Court of Appeals hearings. But at the urging of my wife, last Wednesday morning I attended the hearing regarding PolyMet Mining's permit for copper-nickel mining in the headwaters of the St. Louis River in northern Minnesota ("[Court extends pause on PolyMet,](http://www.startribune.com/court-of-appeals-keeps-polymet-s-dnr-permits-on-hold/563791642/)" (<http://www.startribune.com/court-of-appeals-keeps-polymet-s-dnr-permits-on-hold/563791642/>), Oct. 25).

I was both riveted by the arguments of the lawyers and questions of the judges and disappointed by our Department of Natural Resources, whose job I thought was to protect and preserve our state's natural resources. Instead I saw them standing shoulder to shoulder with PolyMet defending what appeared to be a waste storage and remediation plan that was short on solid engineering details and long on hope that somehow they would figure it out as they went along.

Even one of the judges, who were holding both sides' feet to the fire in presenting the facts, characterized the plan as a "Hail Mary."

I know they have been working on this for 14 years, and all the experts have said that the dam would safely contain the waste tailings. But I'm sure the same thing was said about the Brumadinho dam in Brazil before it collapsed and killed more than 250 people this past January. And we're expected to use the same design? The design that has now been banned in Brazil?

The North Shore needs jobs, so why not create jobs installing solar panels and wind turbines? Instead of extracting minerals from the ground, why not extract increased energy efficiency and savings from our homes and businesses? If they have the skilled labor to manufacture airplanes up north, why not manufacture electric vehicles, electric boats and electric bikes?

The copper and nickel that we have underground is a resource that we can keep in the ground and bank until a future when reliable technology allows it to be safely extracted.

We are blessed to have groups like the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and other citizens' groups who are willing to put the hard work into asking the hard questions that hold government officials accountable to the public they are sworn to serve.

I encourage concerned citizens to contact our governor and DNR commissioner to urge them to take the long view to protect and conserve the precious natural heritage that we share with both present and future generations.

KEN FOX, ST. LOUIS PARK

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Yesterday I attended a discussion about the PolyMet project facilitated by the nonprofit organization WaterLegacy. I have read with interest the discussions in this paper and other media venues. However, there is so much more to unearth regarding how this project is being pushed by the mining industry, which is silencing studies and the voices of concerned Minnesotans. Neither the state nor federal agencies responsible for



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A canoist paddles among wild rice strands in the St. Louis River estuary. The proposed PolyMet Mine would sit at the headwaters of

ensuring the protection of our resources appear to be acting in good faith. Fortunately, WaterLegacy has done the legwork for the citizens of Minnesota. We just need to inform ourselves and urge our representatives to let the facts speak for themselves.

The mine has an expected life span of only 20 years. PolyMet has yet to commit to union jobs in writing. Glencore, its parent, has a reputation of environmental and human rights violations. PolyMet has yet to secure the finances needed to ensure environmental cleanup. The project dramatically minimizes its environmental impact, often ignoring or burying critical studies. To date, the courts have been doing the work of our elected officials. So we are risking the northern watershed for a high risk, short-term, nonunion mine.

Water is to Minnesota what the rainforest is to Brazil. Let's not deliberately burn it down.

SUSAN BARRETT, MORA, MINN.

## **DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS**

### **It's scaring away lifelong residents**

I made my annual trek to a home Vikings game Thursday night and headed downtown with my wife from the western suburbs at 5:15 for the 7:20 start. What a disaster. Fighting traffic (no surprise) and numerous construction projects in or near downtown (big surprise), we arrived at our seats an hour and 45 minutes later. Nothing like the memories of going to a game at Met Stadium in Bloomington from our south Minneapolis home in the '60s.

Hoping to avoid the end-of-game crowd, we left at the beginning of the fourth quarter as the Vikings seemed to have the game well in hand. Heading on foot to our parked car at 8th Street and Marquette we went south to 8th and proceeded west. Very disturbing to find what seemed to be a war zone the entire stretch of 8th street while we attempted to get to our car. Sidewalk closures, torn-up roads, dark streets, groups of young men harassing us, it all made for a very uncomfortable experience. As a lifelong resident of the metro area, I was extremely upset that the city would allow this experience to be so distasteful. Surely the city leaders cannot want this to be how people, residents or out-of-towners, view the downtown area. This is definitely not the city I grew up in.

STEVE ARUNDEL, WAYZATA

## **PARKING RULES**

### **What a bother for leaf removal**

Mayor Jacob Frey, City Council President Lisa Bender and others who want Minneapolis to better serve its citizens: Why are vehicles impounded during the fall street sweeping?

Minneapolis posts "no parking" in sections of neighborhoods in an orderly system to enable it to clean the streets and pick up the leaves at the end of the year, a needed service. Failure to comply with the parking restrictions can result in a tag and a tow to the impound lot. But there is no valid reason to impound cars to sweep the street.

Continue to tag the cars, even up the fine if necessary, but vehicles ought not be towed during street cleaning. As a contractor who has worked outside in Minneapolis for over 40 years, I have witnessed a crew of several workers idled for a period of time while waiting for a tow truck to remove a car in the crew's path. Let's get some long-handled brooms and shovels on the street and clean around the cars. Could some of an increased fine help fund that hand labor involved with this change? Impounding these vehicles is hardly a fitting punishment to this transgression.

There is a valid claim in the winter with snow piled up that the streets need to be wide enough to allow emergency vehicles to pass. Fair enough. But this is street sweeping, for heaven's sake.

This is not a change that would require testing nor an FDA-like approval process. This change can happen at the next City Council meeting.

The reality of the impound lot is that it is Minneapolis' less affluent citizens who are inordinately paying the price for having their cars impounded for various reasons. Please extend a greater measure of respect to these citizens, and eliminate the needless, wasteful and just plain wrong practice of impounding cars with this season's street sweeping.

RICHARD COUSINS, EDINA

## **THE WALL**

### **Hey, we could use one of those**

Trump said he wants a wall in Colorado, before walking it back.

Minnesota should have one first. It could be along the Wisconsin border to keep the Packers out. Then it could run along the northern border to keep the Canadians from coming down here and buying expensive medications.

But an even better idea: a wall across the Mississippi River to keep the Asian carp out — all those Asian carp coming here without green cards. That is something Trump should love. He could run on that.

JAMES CORCORAN, ROSEMOUNT

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