



Invitation to Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting - Wed. May 4, 2022, 10am CT

Welcome to the Tamarack Water Alliance fifth monthly newsletter. We thank you for signing up for these updates. Everyone is invited to attend our open community virtual Zoom meeting on Wednesday, May 4, 2022 at 10am CT. This is an opportunity for you to be learn about Social License and Community Consent and how this relates to the risks of the proposed Talon Metals Mine in Aitkin County. Please bring your questions, concerns, and ideas. We will also share updates on other facets of our work to inform our neighbors and community.

For this month's newsletter, we focus on two questions: Has Talon Metals earned community consent? Do they have social license to operate? If you believe nickel-sulfide mining is too risky in Aitkin County, Tamarack Water Alliance will have yard signs with this messaging available for a \$5 donation this spring. We also posted excerpts from Aaron Brown's January 2022 article in the Minnesota Reformer about *The Troubled Border Between Consumption and Conservation*.

We hope you will share this information with others and keep in touch as we build a community that can protect water and health from the dangers of sulfide mining.

Has Talon Metals Earned Community Consent? Do They Have Social License To Operate?

The concept of a Social License or a Social License to operate (SLO) is a relatively

new term that is used to explain the public's power to compel industrial mining to abide by strict environment standards in their community. It is a powerful concept where people work together to block risky activities from harming their land, air, and water. On the other hand some companies seek the SLO to prevent lawsuits, demonstrations, and community pushback.

A social license to operate is made up of three components: legitimacy, credibility, and trust. A mining company may think it has earned legitimacy, credibility and trust. It can hold public meetings and ask for community input. Company leaders can collaborate with politicians, donate money to community resources and send representatives to attend/present at local board meetings. However legitimacy is forfeited if in-depth community questions are raised and are only given "fluff" answers. Marketing hype does not replace vital concerns that are raised based on good scientific evidence and facts that point to seri environmental degradation in huge wetlands such as those in Aitkin County.

In fact, the SLO concept is illusory unless there are laws that give actual power to the community and resources to enforce those laws. In Minnesota, Water Legacy notes that the very state regulatory agencies (the MPCA and the DNR) designated to protect Minnesota's clean water actually work to deregulate and weaken water quality standards to protect polluters.

Sometimes SLO is used interchangeably with the term Community Consent which can be viewed as meeting a higher standard. Community Consent according to Lynn Mizner "must be gained before operations begin, where a community is treated as a partner, rather than an obstacle to overcome." *Aitkin Independent Age, April 2, 2022.* This involves a cooperative relationship between a community and an industry where they have enough information and time to assess whether they accept the company's presence, based on the community's needs.

No one can argue the water needs of the public may be different than the needs of a foreign mining concern such as Talon Metals Corporation in Tamarack. It is vital that community members of Aitkin County be informed of the huge risks and unanswered questions involved with a nickel-sulfide mine in Tamarack. There is a list of these concerns which include the preservation of water quality, mine closure, and plummeting real estate values. These concerns are posted at tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf.

In summary these concerns are: The Talon mine has average water pumping requirements of over 2.3 million gallons a day ... 1.1 million gallons per day out of the aquifers. This water ends up as dirty water but Talon appears not to have any plans to treat this water. Further, they have not explained how they might dispose of the water after it is used. Talon intends to leave a covered, high sulfide and toxic cobalt tailings pile in Tamarack, which will slowly leak over time, contaminating water in the area. Lake/vacation property values in the area will drop. Who wants to vacation near a toxic waste site? In addition, Talon's marketing strategy is to deliver "green nickel for EV car batteries" when the entire auto industry is undergoing a revolution to equip current and future EV's with non-nickel lithium ferrous sulfate batteries, and other non-nickel based

batteries. Nickel will not be in demand by the time Talon is operative in 2026. The question is why pursue nickel-sulfide mining when ferrous metal is already mined in Minnesota?

As Aitkin community residents we can deny Community Consent and pressure our representatives to not grant a Social License to Talon Metals. The SLO is only granted, in theory, when polluters agree to operate within guidelines that protect the watershed now and that checks and balances are in place that our water is safe for our children and their children for many generations to come. Given what we know from Talon Metals PEA **they have a lot more work to do** to answer community concerns which meet strict environmental standards.

Frederick Douglas said, “Power concedes nothing without a demand.” It took well over 100 years for those words to empower people. With climate change on our doorstep, we do not have 100 years. Damage to our watershed now may last several generations or be impossible to cleanup. As landowners we can collectively raise our voices and say “Nickel Mining is too risky” in Aitkin County. The Tamarack Water Alliance will have these yard signs available for a \$5 donation.

If you believe nickel-sulfide mining is too risky in Aitkin County we encourage you to voice your opposition to this mine. Email waters@tamarackwateralliance.org to arrange pick up of your sign.

Learn more about the concerns of the Talon Metals mine at <https://tamarackmine.org> and <https://tamarackwateralliance.org/>.

Download the most recent community concerns slide presentation
<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf>

NO NICKEL MINING Too Risky

TAMARACK

WATER ALLIANCE

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"Even though value-added iron mining remains viable, my native northern Minnesota now seems best known for mines that do not exist: proposed new copper, nickel and precious metal mines like PolyMet, Twin Metals, and others...The real and under-examined problem for Minnesota's proposed copper-nickel mines is that their estimated costs exceed the potential profits from selling the metals at current prices...

If you follow this story you might view this as a classic "jobs vs. the environment" debate, a rusty old cliché from the 1970s thinking about how this stuff works. But it's actually an even older cliché: the notion that progress can only happen through uninhibited consumption of non-renewable resources.

For one thing, even if we swallowed the hook on the company line, we'd still be years from the economic benefit of new mining...For another, why should we assess an estimated future value of copper without also estimating the future value of fresh water?"

Aaron Brown author of January 26, 2022 Minnesota Reformer article
The Troubled Border Between Consumption and Conservation
(<https://minnesotareformer.com/2022/01/26/the-troubled-border-between-consumption-and-conservation/>)

Who We Are

Tamarack Water Alliance (tamarackwateralliance.org) is a group of local residents and landowners working together with others from across Minnesota to protect water and community health from the dangers of sulfide mining near our beloved lakes and wild rice beds, at the headwaters of the Kettle River and in the Mississippi River watershed.

A proposal by a foreign owned mining company to mine nickel and other metals near Tamarack in Aitkin County threatens the health of our communities. This kind of sulfide mining, especially in water-rich environments, has never been done without severe impacts to water and the health of those downstream. Mining here is also a threat to environmental justice and the long-term economic security of nearby native and rural communities.

We will be sending this monthly newsletter to keep you informed about this project, to share information and opportunities to act, and to invite you to gatherings where you can connect with others who share a passion for clean water and community health.

