

What is environmental review?

When a mining project in Minnesota is proposed, completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required.

Environmental review requires state and federal agencies with the involvement of tribal governments to assess the potential project impacts under laws called the National Environmental Policy Act and the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act.

Ultimately, the goals of the public environmental review are to:

- Disclose project details
- Rigorously analyze the benefits and impacts of a proposed project
- Evaluate project alternatives and mitigation measures
- Follow the legally defined processes and ensure public input is considered

The environmental review process for a mining project typically begins after years of prior environmental studies. The project description is sometimes called a Mine Plan of Operations.

Today's environmental regulations tightly control how mines are designed and operated. State and federal agencies require strict adherence to regulations surrounding key environmental issues including surface water and groundwater quality, threatened and endangered species, air quality, plant life, wetlands and more.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

An EIS includes a description of the project, a summary of potential environmental impacts, an evaluation of alternatives, the identification of mitigations to further reduce potential environmental effects, and a description of how all public comments were considered.

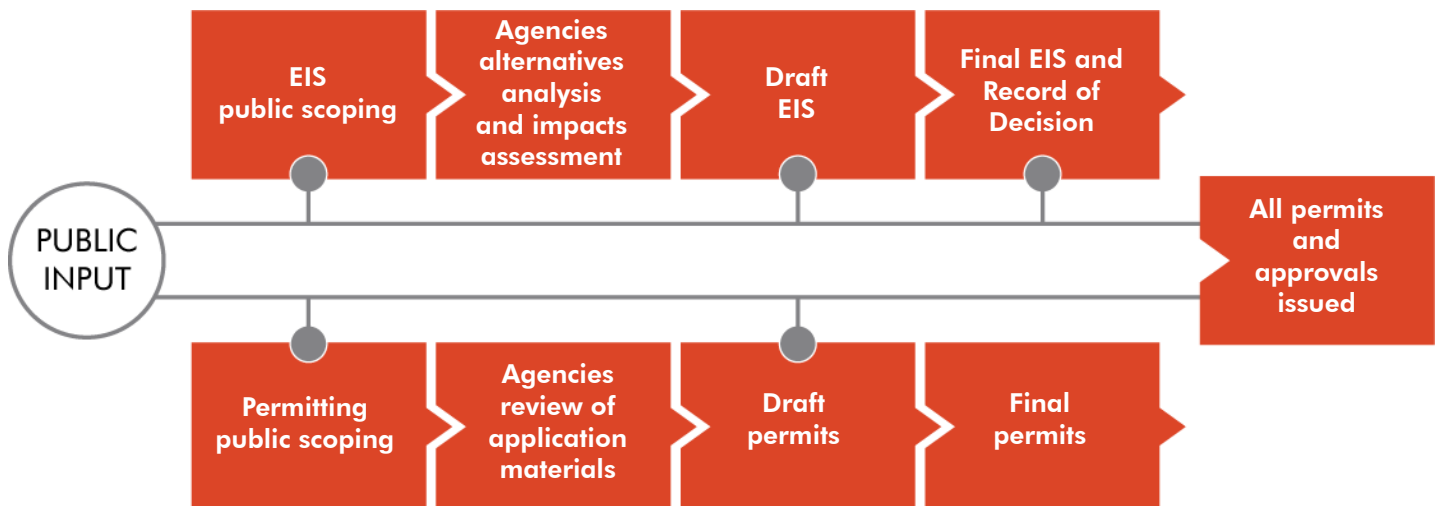
State and federal agencies use scientific, engineering, cultural, and legal experts to prepare the EIS to analyze project impacts and benefits and determine whether identified alternatives might reduce potential impacts yet still meet project goals.

Also, each individual permit (air quality, water use, etc.) has its own separate process, all of which include more opportunities for public input.

How can I get involved?

Anyone interested in a project or who has questions about the environmental impacts of a project should get involved in the EIS and permitting process managed by state and federal agencies. There are a number of ways that the public can participate in the environmental review process of a project (see callout box on next page).

Public comments are accepted by state and federal agencies in person, at public meetings, online or by letter or email during comment periods. Responses from the agencies are required for all timely and substantive comments. A typical EIS has opportunities for public input at the following major milestones:



Public Scoping –The scoping process identifies significant issues relevant to the proposed project and outlines the content, potential alternatives and a timeline for completing the EIS.

Draft EIS –A draft EIS compiles the technical information that relates to environmental impacts and is available for public review and comment. An information meeting is held in the county in which the project is proposed, and often in other locations as well.

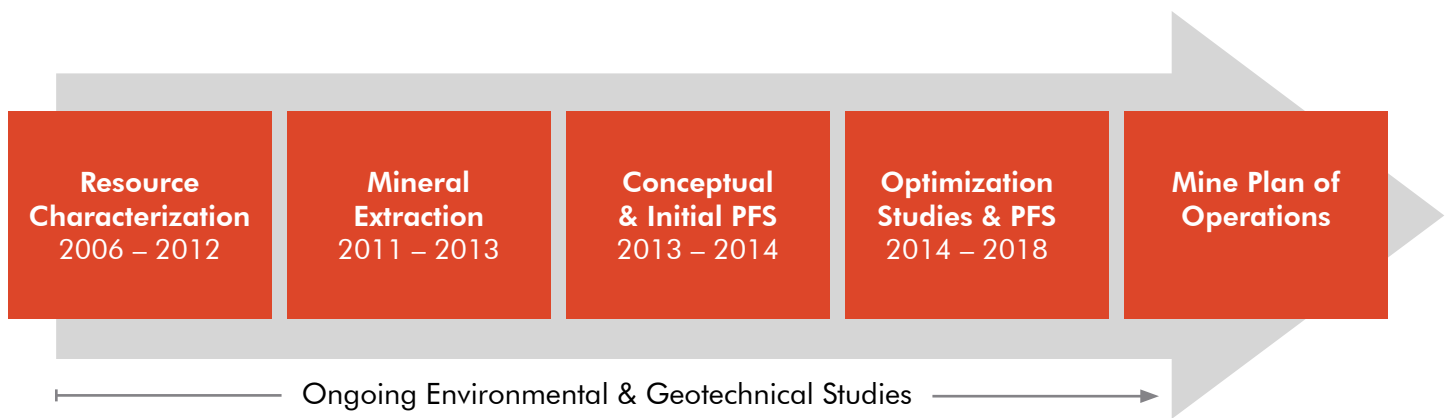
Final EIS –For a final EIS to be complete, it must address

the potentially significant issues and alternatives raised in scoping, provide responses to substantive comments received from the public and be completed in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

Draft and Final Permits –The EIS process provides agencies with a necessary understanding of potential impacts, alternatives, mitigation and monitoring. From this knowledge they issue draft permits, seek public input, and then issue their final permits. Often the final permits contain agency-imposed conditions, monitoring, financial assurance, and more.

Twin Metals Minnesota Project site

Twin Metals Minnesota (TMM) has been conducting studies at its project site for more than a decade. Based on the findings of these studies, TMM has developed a Mine Plan of Operations and a Scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet.



General guidance for citizen involvement for the state and federal environmental review process can be found at:

Minnesota Environmental Quality board
<https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/content/environmental-review-guidance-citizens>

Environmental Protection Agency
NEPA citizen engagement
<https://www.epa.gov/nepa/how-citizens-can-comment-and-participate-national-environmental-policy-act-process>

Bureau of Land Management
<https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/public-participation>