

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness  
Republican Party of Minnesota Caucus Training Materials  
Frequently Asked Questions about the Caucus

*What is a caucus?*

A caucus is a gathering of party members to elect precinct leaders, conduct preference polls, and forward resolutions to modify the party platform. Statewide caucuses are held every two years by the major parties in Minnesota.

*When is the caucus this year?*

This year, caucuses are being held on Tuesday, February 2 at 7:00 PM.

*Where is my caucus?*

The location of your caucus is determined by your precinct. To find the location of your caucus, go to <http://caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us/> and enter your address.

*What happens at a caucus?*

There are several things that occur at an RPM caucus:

- 1) Election of precinct leadership
- 2) Election of delegates and alternates to BPOU Conventions
- 3) In 2010, a statewide preference ballot for endorsement of a candidate for Governor
- 4) Introduction and adoption of resolutions to modify the party platform

*What can you do to help raise the issue of nonferrous mining at the caucus?*

First, consider serving as a delegate or alternate to your BPOU convention. These conventions are held on different dates, but mostly on a Saturday during March. Your precinct chair will announce the date. Your voice on this issue is important, and attending your BPOU convention allows your voice to be heard!

Second, ask questions! Your caucus may be visited by elected officials seeking your support. You may also be visited by representatives of gubernatorial campaigns.

Ask them what their position is on financial assurance for nonferrous mining.

Third, introduce a resolution to strengthen the RPM platform on financial assurance for nonferrous mining. We've made it easy for you; there is an attached form that is already filled out with the text of a resolution that we hope supporters will introduce statewide. All you have to do is type in your name and contact information at the top of the form, print it out, and bring it with you to the caucus. We've also attached a short speech that you can use to introduce your resolution, and a fact sheet that you can use to answer questions. After you introduce your resolution, you will have the opportunity to speak in support of it. If there is any opposition to a resolution, there can be up to ten minutes of discussion, alternating pro and con. Then the caucus will vote, and if a resolution receives a majority of the votes, it is sent on for consideration at the BPOU convention.

Remember, a caucus is just a gathering of neighbors who care enough about their community to gather and discuss issues on a Tuesday night in February. Relax, get to know your neighbors, and help them understand the importance of this issue!

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Resolution Introduction Speech

*Note: You can write your own speech to introduce your resolution, or if you like you can use the one below.*

Nonferrous mining (also known as copper-nickel, hardrock, and sulfide mining) has caused serious environmental damage almost everywhere it has been done. Currently, several mining companies are currently seeking to develop nonferrous mines in Minnesota for the first time in the state's history and the development of these mines is a serious threat to the clean water of the state.

Mining interest in Minnesota is centered in the northeastern part of the state, with many mines possible near some of Minnesota's best lakes for fishing and recreation. Presently, a proposed mine near Hoyt Lakes has filed a draft environmental impact statement and is in the comment stage.

These mining companies have promised that they won't pollute, but the industry's track record from other states is of consistently failed predictions and polluted lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater. Faced with massive clean-up bills at closed mines, mining companies have frequently filed for bankruptcy and forced taxpayers to pay for multi-million dollar cleanup and maintenance operations.

The Republican Party of Minnesota platform correctly places the responsibility for the cleanup of pollution on the polluter. Unfortunately, there is a long history of polluters avoiding responsibility for cleanup by declaring bankruptcy or other means.

Therefore, I ask this caucus to adopt the following resolution.

Under "Enjoying and Protecting Our Natural Resources" modify "B. Imposing the cost of environmental clean up on those who cause pollution." to read:

"B. Imposing the cost of environmental clean up on those who cause pollution, including requiring nonferrous mining companies to provide adequate financial assurance to provide for clean up in case they go bankrupt or otherwise abandon the mine."

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF MINNESOTA

RESOLUTIONS FORM

February 2, 2010 Precinct Caucus

STEPS TO CHANGE THE PLATFORM of the REPUBLICAN PARTY of MINNESOTA:

- Resolutions that are passed at the Precinct Caucus will be forwarded to the 2010 BPOU Convention.
The BPOU Convention votes on these Resolutions, requiring a simple majority to pass.
Resolutions that are passed at the BPOU Convention are then to be forwarded to the 2010 Congressional District Convention where they are voted on; a simple majority is required to pass.
Resolutions that are passed at the Congressional District Convention will then be forwarded to the 2010 State Convention where they are voted on; where once again a simple majority is required to pass.
Resolutions that are passed at the 2010 State Convention are incorporated into the Standing Platform of the Republican Party of Minnesota.

The Standing Platform of the Republican Party of Minnesota has 9 PLANKS. Before writing your proposed Resolution, indicate to which PLANK your Resolution pertains (review the accompanying Precinct Caucus Tabloid for current wording of the standing planks):

- Creating an Environment for Economic Prosperity: Controlling Taxes, Spending, and Regulation
Preserving Our Civil Rights
Educating Our Children
Strengthening Families and Communities
Protecting the Public's Safety
Strengthening the Rule of Law
Enjoying and Protecting Our Natural Resources
Making Government Smaller and Better
Defending America at Home and Abroad

As soon as you have your resolution written, give it to the caucus secretary. A maximum-10-minute discussion, pro and con alternately, will follow. A vote will take place and if passed, this Resolution will be forwarded to the BPOU Convention.



I move that this precinct caucus support the following change to the above plank (1 of the 9 must be checked): (use back if more space needed)

Multiple horizontal lines for writing a resolution change.

Submitted by: Phone(s):

BPOU: Precinct:

RESOLUTION: Passed: Defeated:

Secretary's signature:

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**Top Five Questions about Nonferrous Mining**

**What's the risk to the environment?** When waste rock from nonferrous mining is exposed to air and water, it can create sulfuric acid, making rivers and lakes too acidic for aquatic life and leaching heavy metal contaminants from the rocks. This is known as acid mine drainage and it pollutes surface water and groundwater, and kills fish or makes them unsafe for consumption. Acid mine drainage has polluted water bodies in many other parts of the country. In some cases, this pollution will persist for hundreds or thousands of years. In Minnesota, the watersheds at risk include the St. Louis River and Lake Superior and the White Iron Chain of Lakes, which includes popular recreation lakes near Ely and ultimately flows into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

**Don't we already do this?** There has been iron and taconite mining in northeastern Minnesota for over a century, but nonferrous mining (also known as copper-nickel, hard rock, or sulfide mining) has never been conducted in the state. However, there are a number of proposed mines that are at different stages in the development process. What happens now will influence the mining practices for decades to come.

**Where are we at in the process?** One mining company, PolyMet, is in the comment stage of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for a mine and processing plant near Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota. The public comment period ends Feb. 3. Two other companies, Franconia Minerals and Duluth Metals, are conducting exploration for potential mines adjacent to Birch Lake near Ely. In January, Duluth Metals announced an agreement with Chilean firm Antofagasta PLC to finance the development of its mine. Additionally, in January the Minnesota DNR sold over 100 metallic mineral leases to companies prospecting for these metals and the Superior National Forest has received over 100 applications for permits to explore on federal land.

**What happens next?** The Draft EIS comment period for the PolyMet ends the day after the caucuses, February 3. After the comment period closes, the responsible agencies will work on a Final EIS and the DNR will consider issuing a permit to mine. Legislation has been introduced in the Minnesota legislature to strengthen the state's financial assurance regulations and ensure taxpayers don't end up paying for mine clean-up. (For bill numbers and ways to support the legislation, visit [www.preciouswaters.org](http://www.preciouswaters.org).)

**What's the risk to taxpayers?** Because of the boom-and-bust nature of the mining industry and because after closure mines don't generate profit, companies often go bankrupt, leaving behind mines that pollute the surrounding waters and forcing taxpayers to pick up the tab for clean-up expenses. One solution to protect the environment and taxpayers is financial assurance, a "damage deposit" that companies should provide before mining to cover clean-up costs in the event they are unable or unwilling to do it. Minnesota has some laws in place to manage nonferrous mining, but there are numerous gaps that expose the state and its citizens to significant risks. These problems include a lack of transparency, too much control by one state agency, and allowed forms of assurance that are not guaranteed in the event of bankruptcy.

*For more information about the risks posed by nonferrous mining, please go to <http://www.preciouswaters.org> to learn more and to view the documentary film "Precious Waters."*