



Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

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Northern Metals admits altering pollution records, but settlement allows them to avoid public hearing and accountability

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA -- A settlement agreement between Northern Metals and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) was signed today in which Northern Metals admitted it altered readings of pollution control equipment and agreed to permanently shut down the metal shredder by the end of the day. Community Members for Environmental Justice (CMEJ), represented by the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA), objected to this settlement because it allows Northern Metals to avoid a hearing where the residents affected by its pollution could learn the full truth about Northern Metals' pollution and the extent to which it was covered up.

Under the settlement, the Northern Metals shredder will stop operation as of 6:00 pm on Monday Sept. 23. This shutdown is permanent, although Northern Metals will continue to manage metal it collects at the site until further action is taken. In the settlement, Northern Metals admits that it inaccurately recorded and altered data from its pollution control devices. Without accurate data, there is no way to know whether the devices were actually controlling the shredder's emission of lead, particulates, and soot. Thousands of individuals may have been harmed by Northern Metals' actions.

Because Northern Metals admits in the settlement that they altered records from pollution control equipment and submitted inaccurate information to the MPCA, CMEJ and MCEA urge the Hennepin County Attorney's Office to immediately begin a criminal investigation of Northern Metals. A criminal investigation is needed to address what the Minnesota Attorney General described as "the systematic falsification of its pollution control equipment inspection records" Northern Metals is required to maintain under Minnesota law.

"Once again, the MPCA failed to listen to the community harmed by the pollution from Northern Metals," said **Roxanne O'Brien, organizer for Community Members for Environmental Justice**. "While we are happy the shredder is finally gone, we asked for a public hearing so that everybody could hear testimony about the lies and deception of Northern Metals. Instead, the state settled, allowing Northern Metals to hide the truth. We appreciate the courage and integrity of the whistleblower who came forward. The rank-and-file employees at Northern Metals are not to blame, which is why we asked the court to order compensation for their loss of employment."

"Northern Metals should be held accountable and a criminal investigation should start immediately," stated **Evan Mulholland, Staff Attorney at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy**. "The pollution control devices at Northern Metals are intended to protect people who live and work nearby. Altering this data not only put the community at risk, it undermined the system of environmental laws and permits that we rely on to keep all Minnesotans safe from pollution."

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Using the law and science to defend Minnesota's environment.

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