

**298.223 TACONITE AREA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND.**

Subdivision 1. **Creation; purposes.** A fund called the taconite environmental protection fund is created for the purpose of reclaiming, restoring and enhancing those areas of northeast Minnesota located within the taconite assistance area defined in section 273.1341, that are adversely affected by the environmentally damaging operations involved in mining taconite and iron ore and producing iron ore concentrate and for the purpose of promoting the economic development of northeast Minnesota. The taconite environmental protection fund shall be used for the following purposes:

(1) to initiate investigations into matters the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board determines are in need of study and which will determine the environmental problems requiring remedial action;

(2) reclamation, restoration, or reforestation of mine lands not otherwise provided for by state law;

(3) local economic development projects but only if those projects are approved by at least seven Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board members, and public works, including construction of sewer and water systems located within the taconite assistance area defined in section 273.1341;

(4) monitoring of mineral industry related health problems among mining employees;

(5) local public works projects under section 298.227, paragraph (c); and

(6) local public works projects as provided under this clause. The following amounts shall be distributed in 2009 based upon the taxable tonnage of production in 2008:

(i) .4651 cent per ton to the city of Aurora for street repair and renovation;

(ii) .4264 cent per ton to the city of Biwabik for street and utility infrastructure improvements to the south side industrial site;

(iii) .6460 cent per ton to the city of Buhl for street repair;

(iv) 1.0336 cents per ton to the city of Hoyt Lakes for public utility improvements;

(v) 1.1628 cents per ton to the city of Eveleth for water and sewer infrastructure upgrades;

(vi) 1.0336 cents per ton to the city of Gilbert for water and sewer infrastructure upgrades;

(vii) .7752 cent per ton to the city of Mountain Iron for water and sewer infrastructure;

(viii) 1.2920 cents per ton to the city of Virginia for utility upgrades and accessibility modifications for the miners' memorial;

(ix) .6460 cent per ton to the town of White for Highway 135 road upgrades;

(x) 1.9380 cents per ton to the city of Hibbing for public infrastructure projects;

(xi) 1.1628 cents per ton to the city of Chisholm for water and sewer repair;

(xii) .6460 cent per ton to the town of Balkan for community center repairs;

(xiii) .9044 cent per ton to the city of Babbitt for city garage construction;

(xiv) .5168 cent per ton to the city of Cook for public infrastructure projects;

- (xv) .5168 cent per ton to the city of Ely for reconstruction of 2nd Avenue West;
- (xvi) .6460 cent per ton to the city of Tower for water infrastructure upgrades;
- (xvii) .1292 cent per ton to the city of Orr for water infrastructure upgrades;
- (xviii) .1292 cent per ton to the city of Silver Bay for emergency cleanup;
- (xvix) .3230 cent per ton to Lake County for trail construction;
- (xx) .1292 cent per ton to Cook County for construction of tennis courts in Grand Marais;
- (xxi) .3101 cent per ton to the city of Two Harbors for water infrastructure improvements;
- (xxii) .1938 cent per ton for land acquisition for phase one of Cook Airport project;
- (xxiii) 1.0336 cents per ton to the city of Coleraine for water and sewer improvements along Gayley Avenue;
- (xxiv) .3876 cent per ton to the city of Marble for construction of a city administration facility;
- (xxv) .1292 cent per ton to the city of Calumet for repairs at city hall and the community center;
- (xxvi) .6460 cent per ton to the city of Nashwauk for electrical infrastructure upgrades;
- (xxvii) 1.0336 cents per ton to the city of Keewatin for water and sewer upgrades along Depot Street;
- (xxviii) .2584 cent per ton to the city of Aitkin for water, sewer, street, and gutter improvements;
- (xxix) 1.1628 cents per ton to the city of Grand Rapids for water and sewer infrastructure upgrades at Pokegama Golf Course and Park Place;
- (xxx) .1809 cent per ton to the city of Grand Rapids for water and sewer upgrades for 1st Avenue from River Road to 3rd Street SE; and
- (xxxi) .9044 cent per ton to the city of Cohasset for upgrades to the railroad crossing at Highway 2 and County Road 62.

Subd. 2. **Administration.** (a) The taconite area environmental protection fund shall be administered by the commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board. The commissioner shall by September 1 of each year submit to the board a list of projects to be funded from the taconite area environmental protection fund, with such supporting information including description of the projects, plans, and cost estimates as may be necessary.

(b) Each year no less than one-half of the amounts deposited into the taconite environmental protection fund must be used for public works projects, including construction of sewer and water systems, as specified under subdivision 1, clause (3). The Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board with approval by at least seven Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board members, may waive the requirements of this paragraph.

(c) Upon approval by at least seven Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board members, the list of projects approved under this subdivision shall be submitted to the governor by November 1 of each year. By December 1 of each year, the governor shall approve or disapprove, or return for further consideration, each project. Funds for a project may be expended

only upon approval of the project by at least seven Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board members, and the governor. The commissioner may submit supplemental projects to the board and governor for approval at any time.

Subd. 3. **Appropriation.** There is annually appropriated to the commissioner of Iron Range resources and rehabilitation taconite area environmental protection funds necessary to carry out approved projects and programs and the funds necessary for administration of this section. Annual administrative costs, not including detailed engineering expenses for the projects, shall not exceed five percent of the amount annually expended from the fund.

Funds for the purposes of this section are provided by section 298.28, subdivision 11, relating to the taconite area environmental protection fund.

**History:** 1977 c 423 art 10 s 20; 1980 c 607 art 7 s 4; 1Sp1981 c 4 art 2 s 31; 1Sp1985 c 14 art 10 s 13; 1988 c 719 art 19 s 18; 1993 c 369 s 110; 1995 c 224 s 93; 1999 c 223 art 2 s 45; 1Sp2001 c 5 art 6 s 19; 1Sp2003 c 21 art 11 s 23; 2005 c 152 art 1 s 4; 2006 c 281 art 4 s 18,19; 2008 c 363 art 10 s 18; 2009 c 78 art 7 s 15