

# Michael Maleska

I oppose the site-specific standard proposal from MPCA.

Water carries its dissolved burdens wherever it contacts other water through marshes, hard & soft soils & subsoils, even concrete.

Evaporation and rain (natural distillation) leaves most of those burdens in the onsite "soup", including beneficial indigenous microscopic 'wildlife' (where they can survive).

It took us 50 years to understand that sulfates were the cause of mercury methylation. There is too much yet to learn about why some water bodies with sulfate levels from 0 - 5 ppm become polluted by mercury at an exponentially higher rate than those water bodies with sulfate levels above 30 ppm. MPCA has even proposed allowing more sulfate pollution in water bodies with HIGHER iron concentrations, contradicting their own rulemaking of 2018.

In no scenario does it make sense, scientifically, morally, or otherwise - to abandon the current wild rice standard in exchange for an unproven site-specific sulfate standard. This would open the door for unenforceable variables, confusion, and deliberate mischief.

All organizations and individuals professing to seek the best scientific solution to proposed changes in water quality standards need to be of the same understanding.

Current testing of waters in NE MN reveal one simple certainty: sulfates exist at exceedingly low levels in water bodies within the BWCA and other places where there are no intrusions from upstream mining operations. Sulfate levels there remain predictably steady and low.

Site-specific standard is a crapshoot.

There is never an acceptable time or reason to poison the public's natural environment.