

January 12, 2024

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
c/o Leya Charles
520 Lafayette Road
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: 2024 Impaired Waters Draft List

Dear Minnesota Pollution Control Agency,

I am writing regarding the 2024 impaired Waters Draft List. The list includes Birch Lake, located in both St. Louis and Lake Counties. Birch Lake is included due to MPCA data showing sulfate levels clearly above 10mg/L wild rice limit and the fact that Birch Lake is also a wild rice producing lake. Thus, Birch Lake must be declared an "Impaired water for Sulfate contamination".

Data collected from several sources which are recognized as valid data by MPCA show elevated sulfate levels (above 10 mg/L) in sections of Birch Lake. This data also shows higher concentrations of sulfate within the Dunka River before it flows into Birch Lake. The data points to the source of the sulfate are from water discharges made by North Shore Mining.

The declaration of Birch Lake being impaired for sulfate is the first step in working to get the North Shore Mining discharges to have reduced sulfate and thus improve Birch Lake's water quality and wild rice production.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey K. Pike

2024 Chippewa Shores
Ely, MN 55731