

## Linda Herron

As a regulatory agency, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is a valued partner with the public to protect and preserve our resources- lands, waters and air quality. As a Minnesotan, I have placed my trust in your staff to be as transparent and open to the public as possible. I appreciate the invitation to comment on the Draft 2024 Impaired Waters List and I trust that you will consider my comments as helpful, informed and valuable as any of the many other comments.

I applaud the MPCA for identifying the 2395 wild rice-impaired waters and for adding the 20 newly identified water bodies to that list. However, I have learned that Dark Lake, in the Rainy River Watershed, missing from this new list, should be added due to the extremely high level of sulfate content. Other missing elements are 1.) the plan for restoration of wild rice identified waters to fully protect human health, ecosystems and Treaty Rights and 2.) A plan to reduce mercury pollution in these waters.

Therefore, I urge the MPCA to immediately do the following:

1.)Restore wild rice waters impaired due to sulfate pollution . MPCA should: a) determine how much sulfate needs to be reduced for each waterbody impaired by mining pollution to comply with Minnesota's sulfate standard, b) write mining permits with stringent sulfate limits, and c) enforce those permits. This new effort by MPCA would cut the number of Minnesota wild rice impaired waters approximately by half.

2.)Restore mercury impaired waters and fish. MPCA should: a) recognize how sulfate pollution exacerbates the effects of mercury deposited from the air in its studies and plans to restore mercury impaired waters, and b) set firm deadlines to analyze watersheds and establish regulatory controls that reduce mercury to safe levels.

Knowing that the MPCA has had some negative publicity in the last few years due to the impression that it favors the demands of polluting industries over the demands of the public to protect and preserve our natural resources, I urge the agency to show Minnesotans that it can do the work it was tasked to do. Thank you.