

Michael Overend

Thank you to the MPCA for identification of 2,395 important wild rice producing Minnesota waters. It is information that all Minnesotans should have ready access to and have awareness of the importance of these sentinel water bodies.

I appreciate that MPCA is also now listing 20 additional wild rice waters impaired due to sulfate. To this list I will request that the MPCA please add Dark Lake, just west of the Minntac tailings basin.

The MPCA listing of these sulfate impairments is important but in addition the MPCA must act as a real regulator, setting limits for sulfate load in impaired waters, revising mine permits to add sulfate limits, and enforcing those limits. These steps could restore about half of Minnesota's 55 wild rice waters listed as impaired due to sulfate.

It is also very important that the MPCA acknowledge that sulfate pollution from current mining activities, among other human caused problems, increases toxic mercury contamination of fish. MPCA's St. Louis River mercury TMDL, for example, must reflect this science.

I will request that the MPCA validate its decades-old assumption that mercury air emissions reductions alone will make Minnesota fish safe in 75 percent of mercury impaired waters by 2025. The MPCA should reassess mercury in fish, especially in waterbodies threatened by mining and last tested in 1998.

With the ongoing development of innovative technologies to address sulfide-impaired waters like that being investigated by Clearwater BioLogic of Babbitt, Minnesota, the capacity of the MPCA to facilitate meaningful reductions in this harmful pollution will potentially become a beneficial reality.

The MPCA is an important agency which should hold transparency and advocacy for Minnesota residents as its highest priority.

Respectfully,

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