

## Robert Shimek

Dear MPCA,

There is much that can be said about impaired waters on Minnesota and many will, down to the finest of detail. Waterways of Minnesota have been the catchall for industrial and agricultural pollutants for many years. Before the coming of the white man, the rivers were rivers of life. Much has changed. An old cliché. Turds roll down hill and what's at the bottom of the hill? In many parts of our state, water is at the bottom of the hill. While metaphoric in nature, waste product ends up in our water. This has affected individuals, communities, counties, the state and tribes within MN. While much has been done to clean up the water, there is still much to do. First of all, the agency has much work to do in terms of defining it's relationship with industry. First, the agency has an enduring reputation of protecting the polluters. Second, polluters have the best regulations that money can buy. These are the kinds of things I hear when talking about water, pollution and trying to make forward progress on clean up. The most glaring example is mining operations in MN operating for 20 years without a valid NIPDES permit. Who benefits? The mining companies. Who pays? People and the environment. First clean up the sulfate discharges. Than clean up the mercury emissions from the mines and ore processing facilities. This would be a good start.

It is also time to clean up run off from agriculture. Ag has exemptions and loopholes in clean water rules big enough to drive a beet truck through. Or a potato truck. Or a manure spreader. Or a fleet of them, side by side. Non point source, weakening navigable waterways of the US and very little oversight of ag run off in the state. We have animal poop, fertilizers, and pesticides in the water. Who benefits? Who pays? Make the necessary policy changes. and ENFORCE them.

Lastly, respect the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the tribes of MN. Because of shortcomings by state agencies or by state agencies ignoring tribes, we are now in a position where tribes are making their own water protection rules. Tribes led the fight to prevent further water degradation in the mining district on MN. Tribes are now leading the effort to prevent further degradation in the some of the agricultural district of MN. If the MPCA can't lead, minimally, get out of the way. Optimally support the tribes in their efforts.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Robert Shimek