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I support the Agency's efforts to identify 2,395 wild rice producing waters and add 20 new waterbodies to the list of wild rice waters impaired due to sulfate. However, the Agency should also add Dark Lake, a wild rice lake in the Rainy River watershed contaminated by mining pollution, to the list of wild rice waters impaired due to sulfate. Furthermore, the Agency's current Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan to study and reduce pollutants in impaired waters is too weak to protect human health, ecosystems, and the exercise of treaty-reserved rights from sulfate impairment of wild rice and toxic mercury contamination of fish. Consequently, the Agency should move quickly to:

1. Restore wild rice waters impaired due to sulfate.
2. Determine how much sulfate needs to be reduced for each waterbody impaired by mining pollution to comply with Minnesota's sulfate standard.
3. Write mining permits with stringent sulfate limits, and enforce those permits.

Finally, to restore mercury impaired waters and fish. the Agency 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.