

Lois Norrgard

TO: MPCA, Leya Charles

I am extremely frustrated with the lack of oversight and regulation from the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) regarding Minnesota's waters. This has been so incredibly sickening. I am so tired of the regulatory capture of our state agencies - agencies that we citizens are supposed to count on to protect our health and environment! Enough is enough! For decades, under pressure from polluting industries—including mining, coal, and corporate agriculture—the MPCA has resisted admitting that Minnesota's wild rice waters are impaired due to sulfate. MPCA failed to take the tough regulatory action needed to control sulfate, restore wild rice, and reduce mercury contamination in Minnesota waters. It is time to correct this complete mismanagement.

I support MPCA'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. I request that Dark Lake, a wild rice lake in the Rainy River watershed be added to the list.

In addition - MPCA Should Restore—Not Just List—Wild Rice Waters Impaired Due to Sulfate. The Draft 2024 Impaired Waters List says that a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study of all pollution sources is needed for Minnesota's wild rice waters impaired due to sulfate. You must commit to completing and implementing the study that determines how much sulfate must be reduced to finally attain compliance with the sulfate standard.

MPCA should move quickly to determine sulfate loads, what reductions are needed, and regulate mining pollution to restore our wild rice waters. The most efficient and common-sense way to restore these waters is to set and enforce sulfate discharge limits in mining National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits to reduce sulfate and finally achieve compliance with Minnesota's wild rice sulfate standard.

In conclusion: MPCA must move quickly and set firm deadlines to analyze watersheds and establish regulatory controls that reduce mercury to safe levels. Minnesotans should be able to trust and respect our public state agencies – you have a long way to go to gain our trust and respect once again. Please start by actually regulating sulfate pollution, protecting our wild rice waters, and prioritizing public health and the environment over corporate polluters.