

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. Minnesotans should be able to trust our state agencies to work for our good and protect both the environment and public health. It is time to take the regulatory action needed to control sulfates, restore wild rice, and reduce mercury contamination in Minnesota waters.

I'm glad the MPCA has a draft impaired waters proposal however it is inadequate in restoring polluted waters. The MPCA's current Total Maximum Daily Load plan to study and reduce pollutants in impaired waters is too weak. The MPCA should quickly restore wild rice waters impaired from sulfate by determining how much sulfate needs to be reduced and enforcing strict sulfate limits for mining permits. The MPCA should also restore mercury impaired waters by setting firm deadlines to analyze watersheds and establish regulatory controls that reduce mercury to safe levels.

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 and I request that Dark Lake, a wild rice lake in the Rainy River watershed be added to the list. This listing is important to establish regulatory controls of pollution on the west side of the U.S. Steel's Minntac tailings basin. In conclusion, the MPCA should restore—not just list—Wild Rice Waters impaired due to sulfate.