

Daniel Addis

To Whom It May Concern,

As a concerned citizen, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the draft wastewater permit for 3M Chemical Operations in Cottage Grove. Given 3M's long history of environmental violations and its ongoing legal battles over pollution, it is imperative that we take immediate and stringent measures to prevent further degradation of our environment.

The facility in Cottage Grove, which manufactures a wide array of products including PFAS compounds, has been a significant source of pollution. The inclusion of PFAS compounds in their chemical production is particularly alarming given the well-documented persistence and bioaccumulative nature of these substances. PFAS are known to have severe health impacts, including cancer, liver damage, and immune system disruption, and their presence in the environment is a matter of grave concern.

While the draft permit sets new discharge limits for six PFAS compounds, seven heavy metals, and 55 semi-volatile or volatile organics, among other pollutants, it is insufficient to mitigate the long-term environmental and health risks associated with 3M's operations. Allowing the facility to discharge up to 15.2 million gallons of treated wastewater per day into an unnamed creek that flows into the Mississippi River poses a significant threat to aquatic life, recreational water use, and human fish consumption.

The requirement for PFAS monitoring in various locations, including treated wastewater and fish tissue, is a step in the right direction. However, monitoring alone is not enough. We need enforceable limits and stringent penalties for any violations to ensure that 3M adheres to the highest standards of environmental protection.

Moreover, the proposed modification to increase the maximum load of total suspended solids in the South Metro Mississippi River total suspended solids study is deeply concerning. Increasing the permissible load from 545 kilograms per day to 1,532 kilograms per day could exacerbate the already critical situation in the South Metro Mississippi River, which is impaired by total suspended solids.

Heavy metals, which are ubiquitous in the environment and can accumulate in human food sources, present another significant concern. These pollutants are highly toxic and can have severe health effects, including neurological damage and various cancers. The environment has a limited capacity to deal with heavy metals, and it is our responsibility to handle them with the utmost care. Simply dumping these substances, even in treated forms, is irresponsible and dangerous. The draft permit must include stricter limits and more comprehensive measures to control and reduce the discharge of heavy metals to ensure they do not further contaminate our water bodies and food supply.

In light of 3M's notorious environmental record and the potential risks to our water quality and public health, I urge the MPCA to reconsider the draft wastewater permit. We must prioritize the health and safety of our community and environment over the interests of a corporation with a history of environmental disregard.

Please take a stand to protect Cottage Grove and the Mississippi River from further contamination. Deny the draft wastewater permit for 3M Chemical Operations and implement more rigorous measures to hold them accountable for their pollution.

Sincerely,

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