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49 out of 50 states in the United States do not consider wild rice production to be a "beneficial use" protected by the Clean Water Act. Only Minnesota has decided to protect this "use" for water. Before 1900, it is likely that bodies of water throughout Minnesota were home to wild rice. The Clean Water Act only focuses on preventing future pollution, so Minnesota communities that have previously polluted away their wild rice are not facing the same economic hardship that communities of better environmental stewardship are facing. This is ridiculous. If wild rice is so important to Minnesota, why not make everyone in Minnesota comply with this sulfate rule (and not just from point sources) so that all parts of Minnesota can re-grow wild rice in another century or two. Short of doing that, Minnesota needs to come up with an interpretation that actually makes sense and does not cause undue hardship only on certain parts of the state. When mines have been out of sulfate compliance for as long as the CWA has been on the books, and wild rice still grows where their water is discharged into the environment, it is pretty obvious that the current law is far too stringent as written. I certainly don't blame the MPCA for rejecting a variance request. It obviously falls on the legislative and judicial branch of the government to enact laws and law interpretations that make sense, and in this case, they have failed us. Maybe the only way we get them to act in the interest of the people of Minnesota is to make the sulfate limit statewide regardless of wild rice presence.