

Multiple Senders

Email comments regarding variance received from multiple senders 9/3/25

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: henselerava@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Ava Henseler
<henselerava@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:48 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Dear Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin permits and U.S. Steel's application for a variance. I would like to support the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and strengthen enforcement of water quality standards that protect Minnesota wild rice, fish, and human health.

I support these MPCA actions related to the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits:

- 1) I agree with MPCA that U.S. Steel permits should require compliance with Minnesota's wild rice sulfate standard of 10 parts per million (mg/L) at both the Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin. I understand that draft permit limits of 14 mg/L monthly average and 24 mg/L daily maximum are based on this standard.
- 2) I agree with MPCA that U.S. Steel should be denied a variance from compliance with the sulfate standard. A variance is a specific exception to the rules, and U.S. Steel's resistance to the expense of water quality treatment does not provide grounds to avoid the standard.
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However, I'm concerned that the draft permits have some gaps. The permits should be strengthened in the following ways:

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4) In addition to monitoring for sulfate, MPCA should require monitoring for mercury in surface waters and should update testing for mercury in fish tissue downstream of Keetac.

I appreciate the steps MPCA is taking to control sulfate pollution from the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin. But I would also ask that MPCA revise the draft permits to avoid delay and to better protect groundwater, wild rice, fish, and the health of people who eat fish that are now contaminated with mercury.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Ava Henseler

1068 Overlook Rd Mendota Heights, MN 55118-3653 henselerava@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: annabellemidden@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Annabelle Midden
<annabellemidden@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:36 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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3) MPCA should require U.S. Steel to test wastewater discharge from day one to make sure it is not toxic to aquatic life, rather than waiting for three years before toxicity testing. MPCA should also require new biological assessments the first year of the permit to determine if downstream fish and macroinvertebrates are impaired. Delays like these allow mining companies to take a mile for every inch and steal resources, permanently or long term, from the Minnesotan people, while then expecting our tax dollars to clean up their mess. Preemptive action like consistent monitoring and testing is the only way to save not only the tailings basin ecosystem but to save government funds long term. Our wildlife benefits from preventative care, too!

4) In addition to monitoring for sulfate, MPCA should require monitoring for mercury in surface waters and should update testing for mercury in fish tissue downstream of Keetac.

I appreciate the steps MPCA is taking to control sulfate pollution from the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin. But I would also ask that MPCA revise the draft permits to avoid delay and to better protect groundwater, wild rice, fish, and the health of people who eat fish that are now contaminated with mercury.

History has shown that we cannot trust corporations to maintain the legal pollution standards without state and federal legislation and monitoring. As with notorious, larger examples like the Exxon Valdez oil spill or Flint, MI, we know that as long as they have a profit, or even just negligent, motive to succeed those limits, more and more of them will, disregarding the cumulative long-term damage to the earth its people. As it is the responsibility of citizens to hold our governments accountable, it is the responsibility of our governments to hold polluters responsible, as we the people have little routes or means to do so on our own.

Thank you for considering my comments, and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Annabelle Midden

582 Montrose Ln Saint Paul, MN 55116-1158 annabellemidden@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: aridley2002@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Andres Ridley <aridley2002@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 1:09 PM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Andres Ridley

1775 Lexington Ave S Apt 8 Mendota Heights, MN 55118-3629 aridley2002@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: ciaranarthurrp@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Ciaran Kelly
<ciaranarthurrp@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 12:07 PM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Miss Ciaran Kelly

1737 Stanford Ave Saint Paul, MN 55105-2041 ciaranarthurp@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: georgannek2004@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Georganne Krause
<georgannek2004@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 1:55 PM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

ms. Georganne Krause

901 Como Blvd E Apt 401 Saint Paul, MN 55103-1049 georgannek2004@yahoo.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: gene@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Gene Kremer
<gene@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 7:47 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Mr. Gene Kremer

3938 Cannon Ball Lake Rd Duluth, MN 55803-8209 gene@outinthewoods.us

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: lucygrina@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Lucy Grina
<lucygrina@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 2:42 PM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Dear Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin permits and U.S. Steel's application for a variance.

We need the standards to continue to be in place to ensure that the growth of wild rice will not be impaired. By reducing sulfate levels in the water, we will also reduce the amount of mercury present in our fish. This ensures that not only is the environment cleaner and safer for the ecosystem but also safer for humans that drink the water and eat fish from these waters. I would like to support the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and strengthen enforcement of water quality standards that protect Minnesota wild rice, fish, and human health.

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- 3) I support MPCA's requirement that U.S. Steel monitor waste streams at both the Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin for sulfate and other pollutants. It seems that this should have been required a long time ago.
- 4) I understand that there has always been pushback from the mining industry and threats that if they must treat water to reduce sulfate, they will go bankrupt and mining jobs will be lost. This is not true. There are entrepreneurs from our iron range region who have the technology to treat impaired sulfate waters in a cost effective manner. It would be a win for both the jobs and the environment on the Iron Range!
- 5) Certainly we both (mining companies and environmentalists) can come together to support clean water standards. It truly is a win win situation for the health of our communities and the health of our economy that in part depends on iron mining to continue.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Dr. Lucy Grina

38374 Sissebakwet Shores Rd Cohasset, MN 55721-8960 lucygrina@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: juenbug29@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Sheryl Juenemann <juenbug29@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 6:31 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Sheryl Juenemann

8917 Kell Ave S Bloomington, MN 55437-1413 juenbug29@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: stephaniemeisterling@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Stephanie Meisterling
<stephaniemeisterling@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 2:30 PM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Sincerely,
Stephanie Meisterling
6212 Lake St Omaha, NE 68104-4037
stephaniemeisterling@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: epiphaniesafield@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Tanya Hovi
<epiphaniesafield@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 3:55 PM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Dear Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin permits and U.S. Steel's application for a variance. I would like to support the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and strengthen enforcement of water quality standards that protect Minnesota wild rice, fish, and human health.

I support these MPCA actions related to the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits:

- 1) I agree with MPCA that U.S. Steel permits should require compliance with Minnesota's wild rice sulfate standard of 10 parts per million (mg/L) at both the Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin. I understand that draft permit limits of 14 mg/L monthly average and 24 mg/L daily maximum are based on this standard.
- 2) I agree with MPCA that U.S. Steel should be denied a variance from compliance with the sulfate standard. A variance is a specific exception to the rules, and U.S. Steel's resistance to the expense of water quality treatment does not provide grounds to avoid the standard.
- 3) I support MPCA's requirement that U.S. Steel monitor waste streams at both the Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin for sulfate and other pollutants. It seems that this should have been required a long time ago.

However, I'm concerned that the draft permits have some gaps. The permits should be strengthened in the following ways:

- 1) MPCA should not give U.S. Steel another five years before they actually have to meet Minnesota's wild rice sulfate standard. Sulfate limits were set in Keetac permits in 2011, and studies on treatment were done and approved by MPCA almost a decade ago. MPCA should give U.S. Steel no more than two years to achieve full compliance with wild rice sulfate limits.
- 2) MPCA should revise the Keetac permits to require groundwater monitoring, especially the groundwater beneath and adjacent to the Tailings Basin. This monitoring is needed to protect groundwater and to help determine if pollutants released through groundwater are causing or adding to violations of surface water standards.

3) MPCA should require U.S. Steel to test wastewater discharge from day one to make sure it is not toxic to aquatic life, rather than waiting for three years before toxicity testing. MPCA should also require new biological assessments the first year of the permit to determine if downstream fish and macroinvertebrates are impaired.

4) In addition to monitoring for sulfate, MPCA should require monitoring for mercury in surface waters and should update testing for mercury in fish tissue downstream of Keetac.

I appreciate the steps MPCA is taking to control sulfate pollution from the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin. But I would also ask that MPCA revise the draft permits to avoid delay and to better protect groundwater, wild rice, fish, and the health of people who eat fish that are now contaminated with mercury.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Tanya Hovi

7898 Hovis Rd Virginia, MN 55792-8061

epiphaniesafeld@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: twotzka@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Timothy Wotzka
<twotzka@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 10:48 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Sincerely,

Mr. Timothy Wotzka

37997 Amen Lake Rd Deer River, MN 56636-3064 twotzka@paulbunyan.net

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: zoe@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Zoe Fasching
<zoe@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:45 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Zoe Fasching

2410 3rd St NE Minneapolis, MN 55418-3427 zoe@thefaschings.org