

## Amanda Evans -Healy

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the issue of US Steel's request for a pollution variance that would adversely affect the water quality of Minnesota's wild rice fields. This variance should not be allowed if it does not protect the water quality needed for wild rice growth nor protective of human health and aquatic life.

I am an Oregon native who was fortunate enough to be invited to a wild rice camp where the group has been harvesting rice together for decades. We do not have this in Oregon. All of our rice is cultivated in man made wetlands. The experience of harvesting wild rice as my ancestors must have done before joining the Oregon Trail was a very gratifying experience and one unique to your great state of Minnesota. It would be a shame to see the culture shared by Indigenous and descendants of European settlers harmed because of an industrial response to political pressure. Man can make a great many things which all crumble in time. What we cannot make is safe drinking water or environmentally safe conditions for important food sources to grow.

Another reason to disallow the variance sought by US Steel is the economic loss to the small local business that exist where the wild rice grows. I spent a week at rice camp. While there we stayed at Vermilion lake village resort, I shopped at ZUP'S, bought bait at Norm's bait shop, ate ice cream at Moosebirds, and we hired a fishing guide, not to mention paying a rice processor to finish processing our rice for us. Imagine all of the different businesses we engaged while ricing and the money we put into local pockets. The choice to discharge polluted water into the northern waterways would put tourist and foraging money at risk of disappearing.

One last reason Minnesota should not grant the water discharge variance requested by US Steel is the uncertainty the the pollution will not adversely impact human and / or wildlife health. No one wants another Love Canal and currently with the EPA neutered of any policy making abilities it is absolutely necessary that the state of Minnesota holds fast to it's environmental achievements and not let industry ruin it for everyone by making Minnesotans sick.

Please to not allow this variance. Please protect what is important and unique to Minnesota.

Warm Regards,

Amanda Evans- Healy