

Nancy Metz

I am not a Minnesotan but I long to live in a country where promises are kept. Native Americans have been treated abominably and this includes a sad history of broken treaties.

The United States and Minnesota owe no debt to out-of-state corporations and international mining conglomerates. But the U.S. did make promises to Indigenous stewards in exchange for ownership of the land that became Minnesota.

In 1837, the United States "guaranteed" Anishinaabe people the right of "gathering the wild rice, upon the lands, the rivers and the lakes included in the territory ceded," forever, in exchange for title to that territory (1837 Treaty with the Chippewa). An 1855 Treaty transferred title of more Anishinaabe land to the United States— including the land holding the Keetac mine— but again retained the right to gather rice from the land and waters (1855 Treaty with the Chippewa; *Minnesota v. Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians*, 526 U.S. 172 (1999)). More than a generation ago, in 1973, Minnesota made good to protect that promise when it passed the 10 mg/L sulfate standard.

Today, U.S. Steel wants this agency to renege on the state's behalf for its own profit. But that is not who we are. It is unethical and unjust to break the promise to protect wild rice. I ask you to honor the treaties that underlie Minnesota's formation, enforce the 10 mg/L sulfate standard without variance, and require U.S. Steel to clean up its own mess.