

Pamela LaBine

Dear MPCA,

As an elected official representing Minnesotans and the city of Keewatin, I urge the MPCA to reconsider the enforcement of the outdated 10 mg/L sulfate standard. This standard, adopted in the 1970s and based on research from the 1940s, does not reflect today's scientific understanding of wild rice habitats.

Minnesota is the only state in North America with a sulfate standard of this kind. Decades of research, including findings from the University of Minnesota and the 2018 Governor's Task Force on Wild Rice, show that wild rice can thrive in waters with sulfate levels far above 10 mg/L, and that other factors—such as iron and carbon content—play a significant role in plant health.

A one-size-fits-all approach is not only unscientific, but it also places an undue burden on Minnesota communities. Small-town wastewater treatment facilities, local governments, and major employers alike face costly variances and compliance challenges, which directly impact our ability to support thriving communities and good-paying jobs.

I strongly encourage the MPCA to develop a modern, science-based standard that recognizes site-specific conditions and is financially achievable, ensuring that Minnesota can protect its natural resources while also supporting economic stability and growth.

Respectfully,
Pamela LaBine
City Council, Keewatin