

Jesse Amo

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 stand with the MPCA to protect and improve the environment and human health by protecting our water from causing known health impacts from sulfate reactions and the toxic metals impacted.

- 1) U.S. Steel permits should require, at a MINIMUM, 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. This is a minimum protective standard that can only be speculatively effective with cumulative impact elements like sulfate/sulfide.
- 2) U.S. Steel should be denied a variance from compliance with the sulfate standard. There are no grounds for a variance that is not necessitated and would degrade the environment and human health.
- 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, further that the burden would be on U.S. Steel to fund the assessment and remediation of pollutant impacts on flora and fauna.

The permits should be strengthened in the following ways:

- 1) U.S. Steel needs to meet the sulfate standard now. Sulfate limits were set over a decade ago for this permit and are a minimum requirement. MPCA should demand full compliance with sulfate limits as swiftly as can be accomplished under real world conditions when all of U.S. Steel resources are allocated to do so. Nippon Steel must allocate budget and priority to meeting the sulfate standard including remediation and monitoring.
- 2) MPCA should revise the Keetac permits to require a sufficient number of groundwater monitoring wells to effectively monitor all groundwater potentially impacted by this site.
- 3) MPCA should require U.S. Steel to test wastewater discharge preemptively for all sulfate/sulfide related impacts to both water quality and flora/fauna. Assessments of both chemical parameters and impacts to aquatic life (flora/fauna) should be required following BMPs and financed by U.S. Steel. These assessments should extend to contiguous surface waters sufficient to monitor all site impacts.

I appreciate the MPCA holding U.S. Steel accountable to protective permit standards at Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin. I ask that MPCA revise the draft permits immediately and to better protect water and all aquatic life that have immediate impacts to human health.

Thank you,
Jesse Amo