

Travis Flynn

Hello,

As a community member and student from the Iron Range, I am deeply concerned about the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) approach to sulfate compliance in the draft permits for Keetac. The future of these decisions doesn't just affect industry today—it shapes the communities, schools, and opportunities that my generation will inherit.

Requiring compliance at each individual outfall, when all discharges flow into a single water body, is not only inefficient but also scientifically misleading. The permittee's request to use a single downstream compliance point is a more accurate and protective approach, and it should be honored.

I am also troubled by the MPCA's refusal to act on or approve the site-specific standard (SSS) requests submitted by U.S. Steel in 2014 and 2022. These applications followed MPCA's own guidance and presented evidence that a higher sulfate standard is appropriate for Hay Lake, where wild rice has thrived for decades despite discharges. Ignoring this science not only threatens local jobs and the economy, but it also puts unnecessary strain on communities and schools that rely on mining to sustain the next generation.

I urge the MPCA to:

Refrain from including sulfate limits in Keetac's permits. If limits are imposed, they must be based on a single, scientifically valid compliance point.

Abide by the 2011 law and update the outdated 10 mg/L sulfate standard, which modern science has shown to be inaccurate.

As a student, I am asking you to make decisions grounded in science and fairness—decisions that will allow both our environment and our communities to thrive for years to come.

Travis Flynn
Community Member and Student