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We ask that the MPCA protect wild rice and Minnesota's water from sulfate pollution by upholding the sulfate standard and rejecting variances for mining companies who have raked in massive profits by creating pollution. US Steel can afford to clean up the mess they have made and in doing so they will have jobs for this community now and on into the future. Setting this precedent now ensures businesses that operate in Minnesota do so responsibly. Wild rice and clean water are central to treaty rights, the health of our ecosystems, and the culture of all Minnesotans. We stand together for the water and manoomin/ps^oK and we ask that MPCA do the same.

Wild rice is more than just a food on our table. It is a species that is central to biodiversity here in Minnesota. More than 17 species of wildlife listed in the MNDNR's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy as "species of greatest conservation need" use wild rice lakes as habitat for reproduction or foraging. But even non-threatened species benefit from healthy wild rice stands. Duck hunters rely on wild rice stands for cover, fishermen know that rice stands are a food source for amphibian and fish populations, and birders enjoy the variety of migrating waterfowl who feed at rice stands.

Please apply the 10 mg/L sulfate standard to the Keetac mine without variance because protecting wild rice protects us all.

Economically, leisure and hospitality^o industries that depend on clean water for fishing, wild rice stands for fowl habitat, and a steady flow of visitors who want to see the beauty of Minnesota^o account for more jobs and more environmentally safe and sustainable jobs in the region And 100% of all 5.8 million Minnesotans need clean water to drink.

Also honoring treaties and protecting religious liberties top the list of protection of water, sacred wild rice, and cultural practices on native homeland. Wild rice is sacred to the Anishinaabe, and Wild rice is central to the cultural and spiritual traditions of our Indigenous relatives here in Minnesota. Just as Minnesota law protects other people's cultural and worship practices from degradation by mining, it is important to protect Indigenous spiritual practices from mining.

Protect manoomin from the existential threat of waterborne sulfate by applying the 10mg/L limit to the Keetac mine without any variance.