

City Councilor Randy Nash (Randy Nash)

Dear MPCA,

As both a Keewatin City Councilor and a small business owner, I see firsthand how state policies directly affect families, local government, and our community's economic stability. Like many towns in northern Minnesota, Keewatin relies on strong local employers, small businesses, and affordable public services to sustain our way of life.

I urge the MPCA to reconsider enforcement of the outdated 10 mg/L sulfate standard. Adopted in the 1970s and based on research from the 1940s, this standard no longer reflects today's scientific understanding of wild rice habitats.

Minnesota is the only state in North America with a sulfate standard of this kind. Research from the University of Minnesota and the 2018 Governor's Task Force on Wild Rice demonstrates that wild rice can thrive at sulfate levels far above 10 mg/L, with other factors—such as iron and carbon—playing a major role in plant health.

A rigid, one-size-fits-all approach places an undue burden on communities like mine. Small-town wastewater treatment facilities and local governments struggle with the financial strain of costly compliance requirements. As a small business owner, I know how rising costs ripple through the community—limiting growth, reducing opportunities, and making it harder to provide good jobs.

I strongly encourage the MPCA to establish a modern, science-based standard that recognizes site-specific conditions and is financially achievable. Communities like Keewatin want to protect Minnesota's natural resources, but we also need policies that allow us to sustain local businesses, good-paying jobs, and the essential services that keep our towns strong.

Randy Nash
Keewatin City Councilor & Small Business Owner