

LiUNA (Patrick O'Connell)

My name is Patrick O'Connell and I am an Organizer with LiUNA or the Laborers International Union of North America, and I have the privilege of representing approximately 14,000 skilled construction workers across Minnesota and North Dakota with nearly 950 of those workers being from my home Local 1097 right here in Virginia, and we are urging you to support a variance for US Steel.

These skilled men and women, some of whom are in the crowd here, have their careers built on mining work. These mining projects such as the Oz Project, The Mustang Project, the Keetac DRI project, and the ongoing shutdowns and maintenance work have provided 850,000 job hours annually to LiUNA members alone, year after year. If you choose to enforce this archaic, unproven, and damaging standard then I can guarantee it will not only affect the members mining careers but it will spread across other sectors of work as well. This standard applies to wastewater treatment facilities as well. A majority of our rural community does not possess the funding to make the needed upgrades to existing facilities, let alone, build entirely new treatment plants. That means the funding we need to maintain, fix, and improve our infrastructure and roadways would need to be diverted to address this standard. Tax payer funding I might add, Used to enforce a standard that has no proof, scientifically or otherwise, to mitigate or fix the supposed wild rice concern.

This standard has a far reaching, damaging impact to many industries, whether they be existing or future industries. In a State that already has an arduous, redundant, red tape littered permitting process. The only State to have this standard, as well. If it was such a good standard why haven't other states adopted it?

In closing I again urge you to grant the variance on this permit. Thank you for your time.

[Patrick O'Connell](#)
Chisholm, MN