

Carla Arneson

Comments concerning 10mg/L wild rice sulfate standard:

The proposed wild rice sulfate standard must be enforced at Keetac. No variance. The science is up to date, unlike falsehoods presented by the mining industry and its supporters at the recent hearing in Virginia, MN. I have done my research into this issue, from the 1970's to the present. I am aware of the work done by the MPCA, the interference by the mining industry and the Minnesota Legislature, and the damage being done to our waters and the health of Minnesota's children by the years of delay. Wild rice is the focus of this standard. However, it would not be the only reason to enforce the standard.

Sulfate and sulfate-reducing bacteria are implicated in mercury methylation. Methylmercury, a neurotoxin, bioaccumulates in fish, which are consumed by humans, and this exposure can cause damage to unborn children and infants. One of the commenters at the Virginia hearing, speaking with emotion, said she wanted to know that a year's supply of wild rice, which she had harvested, was safe to feed to her children.

The six taconite processing plants in northeastern Minnesota are the state's largest source of mercury pollution, with the industry accounting for nearly half of Minnesota's total mercury emissions. Those individuals and organizations who deceptively, and repeatedly, state that the sulfate level in drinking water is much higher (250 parts per million versus 10 ppm for wild rice), never mention that certifiable drinking water contains negligible amounts of mercury (0.002 mg/L) or 2 parts per billion (ppb).

Recently, at Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota, wolves were caught on camera catching and eating fish. On an island in Alaska, wolves, a top predator species, have been eating sea otters, another top predator species. The Alaskan wolves were found with unparalleled levels of mercury. <https://www.thecooldown.com/outdoors/alaskan-wolves-mercury-poisoning-infectious-disease/> How many other mammals are impacted? Moose forage in wetlands and ingest wild rice.

Contamination of our waters cannot be taken lightly. Our waters are the most important and valuable resource in Minnesota. Regulations must be put in place, and enforced, to protect those waters. To protect us.

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