

Ryan Sistad

The MPCA's insistence on enforcing a sulfate standard written in the 1970s—based on observations from the 1930s and 1940s—is reckless and shortsighted. It threatens the very foundation of Minnesota's prosperity: iron mining.

Iron mining isn't just numbers on a spreadsheet—it's over \$1.8 billion in annual economic impact, more than 4,000 union jobs, and paychecks that are nearly \$950 higher per week than the regional average. If mining falters, contractors, educators, small businesses, and entire communities falter with it. There is no replacement industry waiting in the wings. Meanwhile, billions in industrial investment are being welcomed by states that understand the importance of responsible development. Minnesota risks being left behind.

We respect wild rice and believe it can and should be protected. But we also respect the people who weld, teach, haul, repair, and build—people who keep Minnesota moving every day. They deserve better than an outdated, one-size-fits-all rule that ignores modern science and real-world realities.

This is about more than the Iron Range. Nearly every industrial and municipal discharger across Minnesota will be affected by this standard. If our state undermines its iron industry, it weakens our ability to compete, build, and grow—and it undermines America's strength in the global economy.

Better In Our Back Yard stands firmly behind U.S. Steel and the workers of the Iron Range. We call for a modern, site-specific approach—one that protects wild rice while preserving the industries and communities that make Minnesota strong.