

Fairview

September 8, 2025

Commissioner Katrina Kessler
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Comments on Draft Wastewater Permits and Preliminary Denial of Sulfate Variance Request for U.S. Steel Keetac Facility

Dear Commissioner Kessler:

As the Chief Executive Officer of Range Regional Health Services in Hibbing and Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital in Grand Rapids, I am writing to express my support for the mining industry in our region and to highlight the important role it plays in the stability of our local healthcare system.

Our hospitals are the largest employers in Hibbing and Grand Rapids, serving patients across a wide geographic area. We operate on very thin financial margins while striving to provide high-quality healthcare close to home. A key factor in our ability to remain sustainable is the payer mix of our patients. Currently, approximately 70% of those we serve are covered by Medicare and Medicaid, with only about 30% covered by commercial insurance. That commercial insurance segment, much of it tied to the mining industry, is critically important in balancing our financial foundation and ensuring we can continue to provide care for everyone in our community.

If the mining industry were to experience significant downturns or workforce reductions, the impact would be felt far beyond the companies themselves. With fewer individuals covered by commercial insurance, our ability to sustain operations, recruit providers, and invest in essential services could be challenged. Both the mining industry and our hospital are cornerstones of the local economy. Together, we provide jobs, support families, and keep our communities viable. The success of one directly influences the stability of the other. For these reasons, I urge you to consider the substantial and widespread economic, social, and healthcare impacts as you weigh decisions affecting the mining industry.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to the health and well-being of our region.

Sincerely,



Jean MacDonell
Chief Executive Officer
Range Regional Health Services
Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital

Cc: Mayor Pete Hyduke, City of Hibbing

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