

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Resolution No. 2025-18

City of Biwabik, Minnesota

RESOLUTION CONCERNING SULFATE STANDARD AND KEETAC MINE

WHEREAS, the City of Biwabik has a long-standing history and identity tied to iron mining, having been the first village incorporated on Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range in 1892 and the site of the Range's first large-scale mine;

WHEREAS, the very name "Biwabik" is derived from the Ojibwe word for "iron", reflecting the community's proud mining heritage and century-long economic reliance on mining;

WHEREAS, mining continues to be a cornerstone of the local and regional economy for Biwabik and the broader Iron Range, providing employment and economic vitality to the area;

WHEREAS, wild rice (manoomin, *Zizania palustris*) is sacred to the native people of Minnesota and wild rice health is affected by many factors besides water quality, including but not limited to: water levels, water level fluctuations, nutrient quality and availability, sediment characteristics, competing vegetation, and predation;

WHEREAS Minnesota's water quality standard to protect wild rice was created in 1973 and the Minnesota legislature in 2011 directed the MPCA to update the standard, which it has not done;

WHEREAS the state is proposing to treat industrial dischargers and municipal dischargers differently;

WHEREAS, 3500 union steelworker jobs and thousands of additional vendor and service jobs rely on iron mining to provide for their families and way of life;

WHEREAS, mining on the Iron Range generates local production tax for the benefit of cities, townships, counties, and school districts throughout the Taconite Assistance Area, including the City of Biwabik;

WHEREAS, mining revenue supports the state of Minnesota, including: the University Trust, Tax Forfeited Trust, and has generated over 90% of the wealth in the Permanent School Trust, benefitting all Minnesota public school students across the entire state;

WHEREAS, reasonable regulation of industry is expected and the people of northeastern Minnesota care deeply about the quality of the environment in the place that they live, work and raise their families;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Biwabik City Council supports a variance or site-specific sulfate standard for taconite operations, including Keetac and that if one central discharge point is available, MPCA should allow measuring at that location and approve a variance for Keetac.

Adopted this 11th Day of August 2025



Steve Biondich, Mayor

Attest:



Jim Weikum, Interim City Administrator

Moved by Mayor Biondich, supported by Councilor Niemi
that the above resolution be adopted:

Ayes: Biondich, Berg, Lehman, Niemi
Nays: Wallert

Adopted: 8/11/2025
Approved: 8/11/2025