

September 22, 2025

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
c/o Stephanie Handeland
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: School Support for Iron Mining, Keetac site-specific standard and variance

Dear Ms. Handeland,

As school superintendents in Northern Minnesota facing a funding crisis in our schools, we strongly urge your support of the variance and site-specific standard for Keetac.

In 2024-2025, taconite mining generated at minimum over \$19 million in local funding for 14 public school districts in the Taconite Assistance Area. Any disruption to operations at these facilities is financially unacceptable and would directly and negatively impact our budgets. This funding supports school building maintenance, programming, and helps keep our lights on for students to learn. We cut our budgets year after year – and this funding remains an important constant, sustaining our school operations.

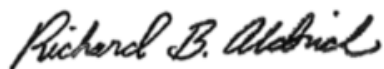
Mining in our area generates over 90% of the funds in the Permanent School Fund (PSF), which is then sent to all Minnesota public school districts and charters on a per-pupil basis. Last year, our local districts received \$1.2 million from the PSF and \$58 million total in PSF funds was distributed to every Minnesota public school district and charter statewide, regardless of zip code.

District residents work in mines in communities across the region, including Keetac. We have hundreds of mining and vendor employees earning family-supporting wages in our districts. These people have children in our schools and are active in their communities. Their jobs matter. Being able to keep families and their enrollment in our districts matters. Our schools connect students with career professionals at these mines and vendor businesses to open doors to viable careers in the industry that will allow them the opportunity to afford their lives here.

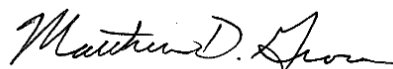
Please support the variance request and site-specific sulfate standard for Keetac.

Sincerely,

Northeastern Minnesota School Superintendents



Richard Aldrich, Superintendent
Hibbing Public School District ISD 701



Matt Grose, Superintendent
Grand Rapids Public School District ISD 318



Lisa Perkovich, Superintendent
Chisholm Public School District ISD 695



Dr. Noel Schmidt, Superintendent
Rock Ridge Public Schools ISD 2909



Dr. Rae Villebrun, Superintendent
Nashwauk-Keewatin Schools ISD 319



Anne Oelke, Superintendent
Ely Public School District ISD 696



David Pace, Superintendent
Greenway Public School District ISD 316



Dan Stifter, Superintendent
Aitkin Public School District ISD 1



Dr. Reggie Engebritson, Superintendent
Mountain Iron-Buhl School District ISD 712
St. Louis County Schools ISD 2142



Rick Aulie, Superintendent
Crosby-Ironton Public School District ISD 182



Dr. Jeff Burgess, Superintendent
Mesabi East School District ISD 2711



Jamie Wendt, Superintendent
Littlefork-Big Falls School District ISD 362



Gina Kleive, Superintendent
Lake Superior Public School District ISD 381



Peter Hardy, Superintendent
Nett Lake Public School District ISD 707

/s/

Beth Shermoen, Superintendent
International Falls School District ISD 361