

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: caiwata@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Carol Iwata
<caiwata@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 10:19 PM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Dear Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin permits and U.S. Steel's application for a variance. I would like to support the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and strengthen enforcement of water quality standards that protect Minnesota wild rice, fish, and human health.

I support these MPCA actions related to the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits:

- 1) Science shows that the sulfide in wild rice waters hampers the growth of wild rice permanently, and that sulfide eventually evolves into methyl mercury which gets into fish and thus has negative impact on human health.
- 2) Wild rice is sacred to Indigenous people.
- 3) Wild rice is protected by treaty with Indigenous tribes,
- 4) Minnesota has some of the best naturally growing wild rice in the nation. I am a dedicated wild rice harvester of 40+ years and use wild rice as food for myself and others.

However, I'm concerned that the draft permits have some gaps. The permits should be strengthened in the following ways:

- 1) MPCA should not give U.S. Steel another five years before they actually have to meet Minnesota's wild rice sulfate standard. Sulfate limits were set in Keetac permits in 2011, and studies on treatment were done and approved by MPCA almost a decade ago. MPCA should give U.S. Steel no more than two years to achieve full compliance with wild rice sulfate limits. Nippon Steel, the new owner of U.S. Steel, should include sulfate treatment in the \$11 billion in upgrades they've promised for U.S. Steel.
- 2) MPCA should revise the Keetac permits to require groundwater monitoring, especially the groundwater beneath and adjacent to the Tailings Basin. This monitoring is needed to protect groundwater and to help determine if pollutants released through groundwater are causing or adding to violations of surface water standards.

3) MPCA should require U.S. Steel to test wastewater discharge from day one to make sure it is not toxic to aquatic life, rather than waiting for three years before toxicity testing. MPCA should also require new biological assessments the first year of the permit to determine if downstream fish and macroinvertebrates are impaired.

4) In addition to monitoring for sulfate, MPCA should require monitoring for mercury in surface waters and should update testing for mercury in fish tissue downstream of Keetac.

I appreciate the steps MPCA is taking to control sulfate pollution from the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin. But I would also ask that MPCA revise the draft permits to avoid delay and to better protect groundwater, wild rice, fish, and the health of people who eat fish that are now contaminated with mercury.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,
Carol Iwata
Afton, MN

Sincerely,
Carol Iwata
PO Box 395 Afton, MN 55001-0395
caiwata@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: carolorban46@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Carol Orban <carolorban46@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 10:49 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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- 2) I agree with MPCA that U.S. Steel should be denied a variance from compliance with the sulfate standard. A variance is a specific exception to the rules, and U.S. Steel's resistance to the expense of water quality treatment does not provide grounds to avoid the standard.
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Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,
Carol Orban
2 E Conan St Ely, MN 55731-1236
carolorban46@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: degustaf@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Duane Gustafson
<degustaf@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 3:53 PM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,
Mr. Duane Gustafson
9245 Burris Dr Cook, MN 55723-8854
degustaf@aol.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: gailhoffman655@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Gail Hoffman <gailhoffman655@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 11:54 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Thank you for considering my comments,

Please consider the damage to land, water and people if this goes through. Please think of The future and don't be short sighted by profit and short term jobs.

Sincerely,

Gail Hoffman

28067 303rd Pl Aitkin, MN 56431-2055

gailhoffman655@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: jgtulseth@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Judith Ulseth
<jgtulseth@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 11:05 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Mining companies have been given too much time to comply! They must follow the laws like the rest of us by contributing to the good of their community. Mining should have the funds with their profits to use the technology that has been developed. Why contaminate fish and endanger citizens when solutions can be worked out with available funds!

I support these MPCA actions related to the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits:

- 1) I agree with MPCA that U.S. Steel permits should require compliance with Minnesota's wild rice sulfate standard of 10 parts per million (mg/L) at both the Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin. I understand that draft permit limits of 14 mg/L monthly average and 24 mg/L daily maximum are based on this standard.
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Thank you for considering my comments,
Judith Tuuri Ulseth

Sincerely,
Judith Ulseth
8787 Raps Rd Cook, MN 55723-8827
jgtulseth@gmail.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: rlulset@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Robert Ulseth
<rlulset@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 11:10 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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Why scrap one industry in Minnesota for another. We need out beautiful lakes and rivers to the economy.

I support these MPCA actions related to the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits:

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Thank you for considering my comments,
Robert L. Ulseth

Sincerely,
Robert Ulseth
8787 Raps Rd Cook, MN 55723-8827
rlulset@yahoo.com

Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)

From: sbjanickednp@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Susan Janicke
<sbjanickednp@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 21, 2025 9:29 AM
To: Kneemueller, Ashley (MPCA)
Subject: RE: U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits (MN0031879 and MN0055948) and Application for Variance

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We are blessed in Minnesota. We have wild rice that grows in our state. However, sulfate threatens this unique and limited food source. In addition, wild rice has important culture and spiritual significance for the indigenous people who reside in this state.

I support these MPCA actions related to the U.S. Steel Keetac Mine and Tailings Basin Permits:

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Dr. Susan Janicke

51715 County 1 Blvd Kenyon, MN 55946-4612 sbjanickednp@gmail.com