

Kevin Hakala

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To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
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I am concerned about the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) sulfate water quality standard of 10 mg/L for wild rice waters and its consequences to the Iron Range and communities across the state. MPCA was directed to review and update the wild rice sulfate standard in 2011 but has not done so to date. The future of Minnesota mines, local governments and other industries are critically affected by the enforcement of this outdated standard.

I believe, personally, that the 10 mg/L sulfate standard needs to be modified. I do not believe the MPCA cares about the Iron Range area in a way that allows us to continue living in here. With smart water having 77mg/L of sulfate, proof that wild rice can grow in 1600mg/L, and law stating that the 10mg/L of water requires evaluation is proving the MPCA would rather align politically than follow science. I urge the MPCA to follow real science when it affects our livelihoods on the Iron Range, and follow it for any evaluation. I am an avid outdoorsmen that loves spending time on the water, and I have family that loves to harvest wild rice, successfully doing that every year here in Northern Minnesota. I have just a 4 year engineering degree, but I do understand how a scientific evaluation should work. What the MPCA is doing with this standard does not add up. Working in the mines, I understand how much this will cost us, and it will leave us less competitive in supplying taconite pellets. This standard will force areas to update city water systems, increase water treatment at industrial sites, and collection of waste. Getting 10mg/L increases energy consumption and adds structural footprints for facilities with no real gain. I am in favor of a standard. Take the time to develop in a meaningful way.

Please take the time to review the standard with a reasonable scientific approach.

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