

union member skylar Mattila (Skylar Mattila)

As a union member and resident of a community downstream from the Keetac facility, I am deeply concerned about the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) approach to sulfate compliance in the draft permits. Requiring compliance at each individual outfall, when all discharges flow into a single water body, is not only inefficient but also scientifically misleading. A single downstream compliance point, as proposed by the permittee, is a more accurate and protective approach and should be honored.

I am also troubled by the MPCA's refusal to act on or approve the site-specific standard (SSS) requests submitted by U.S. Steel in 2014 and 2022. These applications followed MPCA's own guidance and presented strong scientific evidence that a higher sulfate standard is appropriate for Hay Lake, where wild rice has thrived for decades despite discharges.

As a union member, I know firsthand how important mining jobs are to working families and our communities. These jobs provide stability, good wages, and benefits that support households, schools, and local economies. When regulations are based on outdated science, they don't just risk being ineffective at protecting the environment—they also put livelihoods at stake.

I urge the MPCA to:

Refrain from including sulfate limits in Keetac's permits. If limits are imposed, they must be based on a single, scientifically valid compliance point.

Abide by the 2011 law and update the outdated 10 mg/L sulfate standard, which modern science has shown to be inaccurate.

Minnesota needs regulations that both protect our environment and support the union jobs that keep our communities strong.

Union Member Skylar Mattila