

Union Member Barbara Taray (Barbara Taray)

Hello,

As a resident of a community affected by Keetac's operations, a proud union member of USW Local 2705, and a farmer, I am concerned about the MPCA's decision to require sulfate compliance at each outfall, despite all discharges entering a single water body. A single downstream compliance point would more accurately reflect environmental impact and better protect the receiving waters.

I am also troubled by the MPCA's failure to act on the 2014 site-specific standard (SSS) request and its denial of the 2022 application—both of which were supported by sound scientific evidence. Wild rice has thrived in Hay Lake for decades, demonstrating that the 10 mg/L sulfate standard is outdated and does not reflect real-world conditions.

As a union member, I see how mining jobs provide stability and family-sustaining wages for our community. As a farmer, I understand the importance of science-based regulation that balances environmental protection with economic survival. Families like mine rely on both industries, and when policy is not grounded in reality, it puts livelihoods, schools, and entire communities at risk.

I respectfully urge the MPCA to:

Refrain from including sulfate limits in Keetac's permits. If limits are retained, revise the permits to include a single compliance point and allow sufficient time for compliance.

Update the sulfate standard in accordance with the 2011 law and the best available science.

Minnesota can and must protect our natural resources while also protecting the working people and industries that keep our rural communities strong. I urge the MPCA to take a balanced, science-based approach that reflects both.

Barbara J. Taray

Community Member, USW Local 2705 Union Member & Farmer