

Daniel Manick

Dear MPCA,

My name is Daniel Manick, and I serve as Mayor of Cook, located near the Keetac mining operation. I am writing to provide comment on the proposed enforcement of the 10 mg/L sulfate standard in Keetac's permit.

I support protecting wild rice, but the 10 mg/L sulfate limit is not based on current science and does not reflect natural conditions in our state. In Minnesota, most groundwater sulfate levels are below 250 mg/L, but many regions—particularly in the southwest and northeast—exceed 1,000 mg/L naturally. The Keetac proposed limit is stricter than the sulfate levels found in common bottled water like San Pellegrino (445 mg/L). Because sulfates cannot be economically removed from drinking water, this limit is functionally unattainable.

Beyond water, the proposed standard threatens the very foundation of our community. Our schools rely on the Permanent School Fund, which receives nearly 70% of its revenue from iron mining leases. In the 2024–2025 school year alone, \$58 million was distributed to 850,000 students statewide. From 2012–2021, iron mining contributed \$230 million. These funds are critical to ensuring opportunity for every Minnesota child.

Instead of enforcing an outdated, one-size-fits-all rule, I urge MPCA to adopt a modern, site-specific sulfate standard. Such a standard should be based on the best available science and take into account the multiple factors affecting wild rice growth—sediment, sunlight, hydrology, and climate change impacts like extreme rainfall and warmer winters.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment as this impacts my community and my region. Please feel free to contact me at 218-410-9006.

Respectfully,
Daniel Manick,
Mayor of Cook