

Craig Beveroth

We're dealing with Minnesota's most valuable resource - clean water. There's no question that sulphates being released by Keetac are detrimental to wild rice growth, but sulphates are also detrimental to local fisheries. It's well established that sulphates are largely responsible for the methylation of mercury which makes toxic mercury more easily taken up by aquatic plants and fish. Studies are not complete, but they seem to be pointing toward elevated mercury concentrations in edible fish in this watershed. Some science indicates that sulphate levels above 6ppm contribute heavily to unsafe mercury levels in fish and therefore cutbacks on consumption. To this end, I urge the MPCA to not allow a variance to the current sulphate level; if anything, the sulphate level should be lowered below 10 ppm - if Keetac points to an economic hardship to do so, they should investigate the Direct Reduced Iron process being developed by a local company in Babbitt, MN for a fraction of the \$200 million price being thrown about.