

Labors Union Member Harry Homer (Harry Homer)

Dear MPCA,

My name is Harry Homer, and I am a proud member of the Laborers' Union and a resident of a community downstream from the Keetac facility. I am writing to express my concerns 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 requested by the permittee, would more accurately reflect the environmental impact and provide stronger protection for the receiving waters.

I am also concerned 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 requests followed MPCA's own guidance and presented clear scientific evidence that a higher sulfate standard is appropriate for Hay Lake, where wild rice has thrived for decades despite ongoing discharges.

As a union member, I know firsthand how important mining jobs are to working families like mine. These jobs provide good wages, health care, and retirement benefits that keep our communities strong. When regulations rely on outdated science, they risk failing to protect the environment while also threatening the livelihoods of thousands of Minnesotans.

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.

Follow the 2011 law and update the outdated 10 mg/L sulfate standard to reflect modern science and real-world conditions.

Minnesota can protect both our natural resources and the union jobs that sustain families and communities. I respectfully ask the MPCA to take a balanced, science-based approach.

Labors Union Member Harry Homer