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Grouped email comments received 8-19-25.

From: [Christopher Johnson](#)
To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Sulfate Standard For Mining.
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 1:06:13 PM

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Stephanie-

The current sulfate standard to my understanding and what I have read is based on old research and data. The standard that the mining industry is being held to is less than that amount found in a bottle of bottled drinking water.

This doesn't seem right!

The law standard should be reviewed and updated using more to date data, before the mining industry in MN is required to invest significant capital investments to comply with out of date standards based on very old data.

Please review the standard, and make it sensible, and keep jobs in Minnesota!

Thanks,

Chris Johnson

From: [Dan Pierce](#)
To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Sulfate
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 1:06:21 PM

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I testified years ago about the effects on mining if this standard takes effect. I've lived on the iron range for decades and seen no effects down stream from our plant. We have the cleanest water being discharge. Area lakes and streams are by fare cleaner when we are discharging water. The wild rice is most affected by water levels to high caused by storms that detach it from the floor if the water levels are too high. We regulate our flow and monitor our levels daily. Let science come up with ways so we can do both.

From: [Tim Oothoudt](#)
To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 1:06:19 PM

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I am concerned about the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) sulfate water quality standard of 10 mg/L for wild rice waters and its consequences to the Iron Range and communities across the state. MPCA was directed to review and update the wild rice sulfate standard in 2011 but has not done so to date. The future of Minnesota mines, local governments and other industries are critically affected by the enforcement of this outdated standard.

I strongly urge MPCA to update the wild rice sulfate standard considering current science and site-specific variables. The current 10 mg/L sulfate standard oversimplifies the environmental needs of wild rice. Many other factors determine wild rice resilience, such as water depth and fluctuation, predation, and competing vegetation. Wild rice has even proven to be successful in waters with sulfate levels up to 1,600 mg/L and beyond – 160 times higher than our current standard. The current 10 mg/L standard is not proven to be effective and compliance with it is unattainable for many businesses and communities. From wastewater facilities and small businesses to mines employing thousands of Minnesotans, the cost of meeting a 10 mg/L sulfate standard puts Minnesota at risk with no guaranteed outcome. Do not waste time, money and energy on a sulfate standard that doesn't make sense. I strongly urge you to refrain from including permit limits for sulfate until the time and resources are invested to develop a sulfate standard that follows modern science, addresses site-specific variables and contains cost as required by the 2011 law.

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TIM OOTHOUDT

311 NE 9th St

Grand Rapids, MN

218-256-8555

From: [danny barber](#)
To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 5:59:34 AM

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Thank you. D. Barber, Grand Rapids, MN.

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Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 1:06:34 PM

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Thank you.

Dave Smith

16981 W Bay Dr

Pengilly MN 55775

Sent from my iPhone

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Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 7:59:13 PM

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Thank you.

Jeffrey Kiel
709 9th St S
Virginia, MN 55792
616-994-2924

From: [Lydia Kiel](#)
To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 8:20:51 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Lydia Kiel. I am a spouse of an employee at US Steel and Minnesota resident in Virginia, MN.

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Virginia, MN 55792
319-521-3962

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Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 1:06:34 PM

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I am concerned about the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) sulfate water quality standard of 10 mg/L for wild rice waters and its consequences to the Iron Range and communities across the state. MPCA was directed to review and update the wild rice sulfate standard in 2011 but has not done so to date. The future of Minnesota mines, local governments and other industries are critically affected by the enforcement of this outdated standard.

I strongly urge MPCA to update the wild rice sulfate standard considering current science and site-specific variables. The current 10 mg/L sulfate standard oversimplifies the environmental needs of wild rice. Many other factors determine wild rice resilience, such as water depth and fluctuation, predation, and competing vegetation. Wild rice has even proven to be successful in waters with sulfate levels up to 1,600 mg/L and beyond – 160 times higher than our current standard. The current 10 mg/L standard is not proven to be effective and compliance with it is unattainable for many businesses and communities. From wastewater facilities and small businesses to mines employing thousands of Minnesotans, the cost of meeting a 10 mg/L sulfate standard puts Minnesota at risk with no guaranteed outcome. Do not waste time, money and energy on a sulfate standard that doesn't make sense. I strongly urge you to refrain from including permit limits for sulfate until the time and resources are invested to develop a sulfate standard that follows modern science, addresses site-specific variables and contains cost as required by the 2011 law.

The current Keetac compliance schedule is too short and unattainable. There are currently no commercially proven and economical sulfate treatment strategies in place anywhere in the world. Time is needed to evaluate and develop treatment alternatives that are effective and achievable. Since these are some of the first permits to contain the 10 mg/L sulfate limit, other permittees will use the testing and engineering developed for compliance as a model in the future. Current treatment technologies to reduce sulfate levels result in increased solid waste that will be required to be landfilled, increased electrical usage, increased greenhouse gas emissions, and other negative environmental outcomes. Time and careful consideration are needed to develop feasible sulfate treatment that all Minnesotans can benefit from. The MPCA should allow a longer compliance schedule, or grant the variance, to provide more time to effectively find a feasible solution. The current compliance schedule does not include time for regulatory agency requirements such as environmental review, permitting and other authorizations that may be required.

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In summary, I urge the MPCA:

- To refrain from including sulfate limits in Keetac's permits. If the permit limits remain as proposed, the MPCA must modify the permits to contain a single sulfate compliance point and allow more time for compliance.*
- To abide by the 2011 law and update the 10 mg/L sulfate standard that the state of Minnesota has recognized as being incorrect.*

Thank you.

Dave Smith

16981 W Bay Dr

Pengilly MN 55775

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jeffrey Kiel](#)
To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 7:59:13 PM

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Thank you.

Jeffrey Kiel
709 9th St S
Virginia, MN 55792
616-994-2924

From: [Lydia Kiel](#)
To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 8:20:51 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Lydia Kiel. I am a spouse of an employee at US Steel and Minnesota resident in Virginia, MN.

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Thank you for you time.

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Lydia Kiel

709 9th St S
Virginia, MN 55792
319-521-3962

From: [Nelson, Peter J](#)
To: [Handeland, Stephanie \(MPCA\)](#)
Subject: Comment on NPDES permits MN0055948 and MN0031879 for U. S. Steel Keetac
Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 1:24:16 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

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Stephanie –

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Thank you,
Pete Nelson



Minntac Central Shops
8771 Park Ridge Drive
Mountain Iron, Minnesota 55768
Phone: (218) 749-7511
Mobile: (218) 750-7496
Email: pjnelson@uss.com

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