

2014-07 REGULATORY ADEQUACY INVOLVING MINNESOTA STATE AGENCIES

Background Statement:

In recent years it has been common to criticize environmental regulations. Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) agrees that regulatory review is appropriate. The Minnesota Division IWLA does not support such egregious regulations that citizens are turned against government, or against environmental organizations. Proposed mining for copper / nickel and related precious metals has also added attention to our regulatory system. Mining company and business representatives have boasted that Minnesota has strong regulations, regulations that are equal to the task of protecting Minnesota from pollution from mining. (note “strong” has not been defined, or measured against the mining proposals to date) Environmental groups have questioned the claims that adequate regulations exist. These questions extend to whether there is the political will to enforce present regulations.

Governor Dayton has issued an executive order requiring permits to be issued within 90 days of application.

The Minnesota Division IWLA calls for a performance review of Minnesota regulatory performance in the resolution below.

NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America in convention on April 26, 2014 believes that Minnesota must confirm the adequacy of our regulatory frame-work to protect all of our natural resources. To confirm this requirement, Minnesota must audit state regulatory agency performance with particular attention given to mining. Focus shall be on timely and effective agency response to non-conformance with rules applicable to state regulations. This review must reveal credible evidence that Minnesota regulations are at levels needed to provide the protection necessary. In addition, an assessment shall be made as to whether adequate personnel are available to do work on a timely basis.

Finally we request that a review by qualified third party certification of the rigid requirements that permits be issued within an inflexible time period (e.g. 90 days) are in all cases in the best interest of our states natural resources. The IWLA does recognize that often most of the environmental analysis is done before the permitting process begins. None-the-less, it is not unusual for significant issues to remain to be negotiated during the permitting period. Attention to getting it right and ensuring transparency should trump expediency. And, over time, getting it right will serve Minnesota at the level demanded by our commitment to clean water, air, land, soils and the protection of our wildlife and people.

Submitted by: W.J. McCabe Chapter