

Dear Legislators,

I am writing in support of Representative Lee's bill HF 503 to require public hearings of non expiring air emission facilities every five years.

I would even add wording ofAT LEAST every five years. In my opinion, the more frequent the inspections, the better.

My interest in this bill stems from the suffering my community, my family and I have experienced living in the affected "red zone" area of Water Gremlin in White Bear. As you may know, that is the company that spewed egregious amounts of TCE as well as lead and other chemicals for decades.

From the recent Legislative Auditor's report you may also know that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was flagrantly remiss and negligent in their reviewal of reports, responding to permit applications, on-sight, inspections, response time to violations, etc. etc.

If there is anything we have learned from this shocking situation is that there is a desperate need throughout the entire state for more public awareness, concern and education of what companies using volatile chemicals are doing to our health and environment. By passing this bill, it would force the MPCA to diligently review reports and inspections to prepare for the public hearing AT LEAST every five years. It would also provide opportunity for communities to ask questions and to become better informed of any permit violations and potential risks. The ultimate benefit of the bill would be if violations were detected early and then immediate, forceful actions taken by the MPCA to correct them.

I am the poster child for what can go wrong when irresponsible companies are given free reign to run unchecked by negligent governing agencies. I have suffered with cancer and other health issues that have a strong correlation to exposure to carcinogenic chemicals such as TCE. Please continue to fight for better health for me and the many others who have been negatively affected by loopholes or weak state regulations. I thank you for your ongoing work to fight for better health for your constituents and all Minnesotans.

Representative Lee
Minnesota House of Representatives
485 State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55115

February 15th, 2021

Regarding H.F. 503: Requiring a public hearing every five years for non-expiring air emissions permits.

Dear Representative Lee:

I would like to express my support for H.F. 503 Requiring a public hearing every five years for non-expiring air emissions permits.

I feel that instituting a hearing for non-expiring air emissions permits is a common-sense approach to reducing violations. The hearings create an opportunity to identify red flags/chemical misuse for companies using dangerous chemicals. This proposed air emissions hearing also is an incentive for companies to keep better records on an on-going basis with the knowledge that the hearing is on the horizon. Quite frankly, it is hard to believe that this process is not already in place.

Why this matters to me:

I am a resident of White Bear Lake. I live 1/4 of a mile from Water Gremlin--a company that was part of a Stipulation agreement with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for egregious emissions of the VOC Trichloroethylene (TCE) over a period of 17+ year time period. The recent Special Review released on 2/11/21 by the Office of the Legislative Auditor which concluded the MPCA could and should have done more to prevent this misuse.

In the situation of Water Gremlin there was a history of pollution control equipment not working, under-reporting of emissions, egregious exceedances of permitted levels of emissions and more. That means that this company was emitting a poisonous, odorless, carcinogenic chemical into the air. It means, that in addition to the workers at Water Gremlin, my friends, my neighbors, and my family were breathing in these chemicals while they slept, while they played, while they lived. That is wrong. We have the right to breath clean air. We should be confident that there are safe limits on the chemicals that these companies emit.

In addition, H.F. 503 allows the public to make comments or inquiries regarding any aspect of the permit. Sometimes information or red flags come to the attention of citizens. This provides an opportunity for that insight to be formally brought to the attention of MPCA.

While passing H.F. 503 is unlikely to stop every violator, it is a strong step to improving enforcement in the State of Minnesota as a significant step towards accomplishing that goal. I fully support H.F. 503

Respectfully,

Kelly Tapkan

Kelly Tapkan
4380 Whitaker Ct.
White Bear Lake, MN 55110