

Subject Mining

Authors Igo

Analyst Anna Scholin

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### Overview

This bill extends unemployment insurance benefits for certain iron ore miners and makes policy changes related to safe storage of reactive mine waste and water quality standards connected to wild rice.

## Article 1: Unemployment Insurance

This article extends unemployment insurance benefits for workers subject to mass layoffs in the iron ore mining and related explosives manufacturing industries for an additional 26 weeks of benefits.

### Section Description – Article 1: Unemployment Insurance

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- Iron ore mining additional unemployment benefits program.**

Makes additional unemployment insurance benefits available to applicants who were let go in mass layoffs by the iron ore mining industry or by a related explosives manufacturer between March 15 and June 15 of 2025. Extends benefits for these applicants for an additional 26 weeks on top of the regular 26 weeks of eligibility, as long as at least 50 percent of the employee's wage credits were earned in the iron ore mining or related explosives manufacturing industries and regular eligibility criteria are met.

Prevents these additional unemployment benefits from being used to compute the future unemployment tax rate of a taxpaying employer or charged to the reimbursing account of a government or nonprofit employer, except for employers in the iron ore mining industry. Renders applicants who have applied and been determined eligible for federal Trade Readjustment Allowance benefits ineligible for this additional unemployment insurance benefit.

Effective date: This section is effective retroactively from March 15, 2025.

## Article 2: Other Policy

This article sets policy for safe storage of reactive mine waste and sulfate water quality standards related to wild rice waters.

### Section Description – Article 2: Other Policy

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- 1 **[93.5141] Safe storage of reactive mine waste.**

Requires nonferrous metallic minerals mining operations to meet specific standards for mine waste related to water quality. Stipulates that mine waste safety must be studied prior to application for a permit to mine and throughout the mining process. Specifies that reactive mine waste storage facilities must be designed by qualified professional engineers to meet water quality standards and address water drainage.
- 2 **[115.446] Site-specific water quality standards for sulfate.**

Requires the commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency to deem complete an application for a site-specific sulfate standard for a regulated wild rice water if the application contains specific information. Includes on the list of requirements a detailed identification of the water the standard is sought for and the site-specific sulfate standard being proposed for it, as well as monitoring data for that water showing that historically wild rice concentrations in that water are not diminished at that proposed sulfate standard.

Stipulates that the commissioner must not deny a complete application unless and until the commissioner has completed rulemaking about wild rice water quality standards required by law in 2015 and that the commissioner must, to the extent authorized by law, ensure the permittee is not required to spend money on sulfate treatment technology for discharges to the wild rice water covered by the application. Allows the commissioner to require monitoring of sulfate concentrations and implementation of a sulfate minimization plan if the proposed site-specific sulfate standard is exceeded and wild rice may be susceptible to damage.

Sets a timeline for commissioner decisions on applications of within 150 days of either receiving the complete application or publication of notice of adoption of the rule about wild rice water quality standards described in the 2015 session law.

Requires the commissioner to complete the rulemaking for a wild rice water quality standard, as described in the 2015 session law, by January 15, 2027, and prevents the commissioner from deeming any waters of the state as “water used for the production of wild rice” under Minnesota Rules until the required rulemaking is completed.
- 3 **Repealer.**

Repeals existing Minnesota Rules about reactive mine waste.



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