



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

520 Lafayette Road North | St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4194 | 651-296-6300

800-657-3864 | 651-282-5332 TTY | www.pca.state.mn.us | Equal Opportunity Employer

August 8, 2013

Dear Environmental Justice Community Members:

Members of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) leadership team and I appreciated the opportunity to meet with some of you on June 14, 2013. I'd like to take this opportunity to summarize our discussion and outline follow-up steps.

As I mentioned when we met, Governor Mark Dayton expects all state agencies and departments to work to understand and eliminate the disparities that impact Minnesotans – whether those be related to education, employment, health and/or environmental disparities, or access to services. The MPCA leadership team and I are committed to engaging in this work and making significant progress.

As part of our role in this important work, the MPCA is renewing our commitment to incorporating environmental justice principles into our daily work, and we are reaching out to partner with other state departments for help. One example of this is a new joint MPCA and Department of Health initiative proposed by Governor Mark Dayton and funded by the Legislature to understand and address environmental risks including air pollution and respiratory disease in the urban core of the Twin Cities region.

In order to improve our efforts and build trusting relationships, we agreed that it would be mutually beneficial to hold periodic meetings between the MPCA and interested members of the Environmental Justice Community. We have also asked the Department of Health to participate in these meetings. These discussions need to be meaningful for all involved, and to that end, we propose to:

- jointly develop the agendas for the meetings
- schedule these meetings approximately every three months
- hold the meetings in different locations each time, to be hosted by community members on a rotating basis.

If acceptable, I would like to propose holding the first of these gatherings in the afternoon on October 1, 2013, at a convenient location in Minneapolis or St. Paul, to be determined jointly.

Regarding ongoing community relations, we intend to employ a more intentional and systematic approach to communication and outreach before (as early as possible), during and after permitting and other actions related to specific facilities or projects. We also are working on establishing ongoing linkages and relationships with communities outside of this facility-focused effort. To be most effective, we will need the assistance of people working in these communities and we look forward to collaborating with you and others to create and strengthen these relationships.

We will explore the development of key principles, best practices and standards for engagement in environmental justice areas/issues, drawing on the experience of governments and community organizations in other jurisdictions and disciplines (transportation, health care, etc.). We identified the need to increase community involvement in regular meetings and other communication, and we ask you to continue to suggest and provide contact information of people or organizations in the community who you think would like to engage in this work. Alternatively, please feel free to direct people to get in touch with us directly through our Environmental Justice coordinator, Ned Brooks.

In addition, we are evaluating creation of an Environmental Justice advisory committee and look forward to jointly exploring the objectives and desired outcomes of such a group. We will continue working with you to facilitate better ways to support representation by people of color and other underrepresented groups on the MPCA citizen's board.

The MPCA will strengthen or build mechanisms across state government to address important environmental and health disparities, consistent with the direction given by Governor Dayton. I have contacted many of my counterparts

Environmental Justice Community Members
August 8, 2013
Page Two

in other departments and agencies to begin this process. We will also continue to explore additional approaches for government's role addressing disproportionate impacts and environmental justice.

Finally, since our June meeting with you, the MPCA has established a budget for environmental justice work at the MPCA that will allow for hiring interns, environmental justice capacity building activities, contractor assistance, and meeting logistics support to promote community participation at MPCA events. We are still determining if it is allowable under state law, rule and contracting guidelines, to provide on-site child care during meeting times.

I look forward to continued work together and appreciate your interest and dedication to making Minnesota a better place for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Linc Stine". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Linc Stine
Commissioner