

Mark Dayton
The Honorable Governor of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Tom Bakk
Majority Leader
226 State Capitol
75 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Paul Thissen
Speaker of the House
463 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Gov. Dayton, Sen. Bakk, and Rep. Thissen:

We are locally elected officials in communities impacted by industrial-scale silica sand mining, processing and transportation. We believe strongly in local control and in local governments maintaining strong powers to control this industry through zoning ordinances, including moratoriums. However, we are concerned that because of the regional scale of this industry some potential negative impacts cannot effectively be addressed through local ordinances only.

That is why we support state legislation that would:

1) Order an in-depth state study, such as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement, to help set state permitting standards and to better understand the potential impact of the industry on the region and how it can be mitigated.

There are questions about this industry that can only be addressed through the comprehensive overview provided by a regional- and industry-wide analysis. These question include: the industry's overall impact on the availability of groundwater for the region; the overall economic impact, since while some jobs are created, other businesses like farms and tourism are displaced; the impact on water; the effect on wildlife habitat and trout streams; the damage to the region's road and bridge infrastructure; and the health impact of long-term exposure to silica sand dust. The cumulative impacts of the industry must be fully analyzed, and since these impacts are regional they cannot effectively be done at the county level. Among other things, the information produced from this study will be useful to local units of government when they are making decisions about local ordinances and permits.

2) Establish state regulations and permitting requirements for the industrial-scale silica sand mining industry that would serve as a minimal floor. These state level requirements should not preclude local land use ordinances.

This is needed to protect the region's air quality, water quality, water quantity and regional transportation infrastructure. These issues need the engagement of the expertise and resources available from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Department of Health, and Department of Natural Resources. The state would be obliged to create and enforce these regulations, and they would in no way prevent local units of government from adopting their own local ordinances and requiring local land use permits. The in-depth state study mentioned above can be used to determine what state regulations and permitting should be implemented.

This concept of the state establishing a floor that local government can go beyond is how many other industrial-scale businesses are regulated in Minnesota, including large-scale feedlots, ethanol facilities and solid waste facilities. This works well in a state as large and geographically diverse as Minnesota, where trying to create state rules that take into account all local situations would be impossible.

3) Implementation by the state of a moratorium on any new industrial silica sand facilities to allow time to create state standards and permits and to complete an in-depth study.

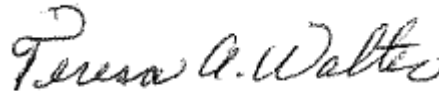
Western Wisconsin is struggling with the consequences of having let the industry develop without any state-level minimum requirements. We don't want that to happen here in Minnesota. We need to get this right the first time and the only way to accomplish that is to put a temporary hold on further development while state-level protections are developed. We believe this can be done in two years or less.

We urge quick action on the above items. The time to do this is past due and we wish that the state had acted more quickly, as the issue is over two years old now.

Sincerely,



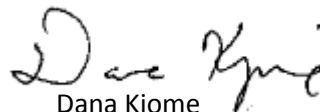
Justin Zmyewski
County Commissioner and Board Chair
Houston County



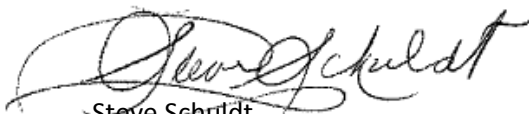
Teresa Walter
County Commissioner
Houston County



Judy Storlie
County Commissioner
Houston County



Dana Kjome
County Commissioner
Houston County



Steve Schuldt
County Commissioner
Houston County



Mike Wobbe
County Commissioner
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Donald S. Springer
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Joe Ellingson
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Ron Allen
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Mike Blair
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Lynn Schoen
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Allen Wharton
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Susan Bether
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Wacouta Township, Goodhue County

Linda Griggs
Clerk
Yucatan Township, Houston County

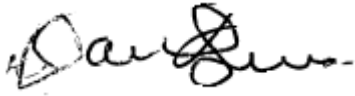
Keith Fossen
Supervisor
Hay Creek Township, Goodhue County

Randall Bronk
Supervisor
Yucatan Township, Houston County

Randall Veith
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Hay Creek Township, Goodhue County

Jim McIlrath
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Chad Dailey
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Jim Ruhberg
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