

Senator John Sterling Howe
State Capitol, Office 323
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
Office: (651) 296-4264
Email: sen.john.howe@senate.mn



Senate

State of Minnesota

July 9, 2012

Office of the Governor
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Request a GEIS on the mining and transportation of Silica Sand

Greetings Governor Dayton:

Silica sand mining has been a great concern to the citizens who live and work near the proposed mining sites in Goodhue, Wabasha and Winona Counties. As the Senator who represents all or parts of these counties, I have attended local meetings and listened to the concerns of my constituents.

According to the Albert Lea Tribune editorial published on July 5, 2012, "Southeastern Minnesota contains some of the nation's deepest deposits of silica sand, which is used to extract fuel and gas from underground rock in the process known as hydraulic fracturing. Fueled largely by the boom in oil and gas drilling in North Dakota and Montana, the frac sand market has doubled since 2008, according to the U.S. Geological Survey."

In conversations with the Environmental Quality Board, it is apparent that silica sand mining, and fugitive dust, have been the topic of several of their meetings and the nine departments that make up the Board have been working interdepartmentally to discuss the silica sand mining industry.

It has become apparent to me as I have delved deep into these concerns, that simply not enough information is known, or expertise available, to make the important decisions which affect the health and safety of the citizens of my district. With several communities' moratoriums on silica sand mining about to expire, it is imperative that they get solid factual information about the issues. I am therefore requesting a **Generic Environmental Impact Statement** (GEIS) for the mining operations and transportation of Silica Sand be conducted to provide the vital information necessary to make these critical decisions.

In the event of a special session, I would request that an appropriation of up to one million dollars be included to the Environmental Quality Board for a GEIS on silica sand operations.

I look forward to working with you to protect the health and safety of our fellow Minnesotans.

In Reason and Justice,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John S. Howe".

Senator John Sterling Howe

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