# EPA Should Reject Minnesota’s Haze Plan

## The Issue

The Clean Air Act requires states to work on improving visibility in the country’s iconic national parks and wilderness areas. Minnesota proposes a plan that is wholly inadequate. The EPA has final authority over the plan, and must reject it.

## Clean Air is Important

- Haze and smog caused by pollution from older power plants and industrial facilities is spoiling views in the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs.

- Haze-causing pollutants cause and contribute to numerous public health problems, including asthma, lung disease, and heart disease, costing millions in health care expenses. The EPA determined that the haze rule, nationally, would save between $8.4 and $9.8 billion annually in avoided health costs by 2015.

- The Boundary Waters Canoe Area and Voyageurs National Park are economic engines, bringing hundreds of thousands of visitors to northern Minnesota each year. Clean air and clear views are a valued by visitors, who number up to 500,000 annually and generate over $100 million in benefits to the local economy.

## Problem with Minnesota’s Plan

- Xcel Energy’s Sherco plant, Minnesota’s most-polluting power plant, isn’t required to get the best technologies that could eliminate much of its pollution. Elsewhere throughout the country, including South Dakota’s Big Stone plant, power plants have been required to install controls called "SCR." Inexplicably, Minnesota is not requiring the same for Sherco.

- Taconite mining facilities, which cause the most haze-impaired days in Minnesota’s parks, are not required to install any controls.

- Minnesota’s plan doesn’t identify any technologies for the other power plants covered by the haze rule. Instead, it substitutes the Cross State Air Pollution Rule, which is a pollution-trading rule intended to clean up air in Eastern cities. Minnesota has not shown that the Cross State rule will be better for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and Voyageurs National Park.

## Widespread Opposition to Minnesota’s Plan

- The National Park Service and Forest Service oppose Minnesota’s plan.

- The Environmental Protection Agency has criticized Minnesota’s plan for Sherco and the taconite facilities.

- Numerous conservation organizations oppose the plan, including: National Parks Conservation Association, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Sierra Club, Friends of the Boundary Waters, Voyageurs National Park Association, and Earthjustice.
Pollution from Minnesota power plants and taconite facilities causes widespread visibility impacts

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has completed modeling that shows the impact pollutants from various industrial sources and power plants have on visibility in the Boundary Waters and Voyageurs National Park. The maps below illustrate the extent of pollution from three facilities: Sherco (Xcel Energy’s power plant in Sherburne County), Hibbing Taconite, and Minntac. Minntac is the source that has the single largest impact on haze in the Boundary Waters. Modeling shows that Minntac contributes to haze in the Boundary Waters 530 days in a 3-year period. MPCA’s modeling results are available on its Regional Haze website.