

# PROTECTING INDIGENOUS CULTURAL PRACTICES



## HF 1042 / SF 1087

Authors: Rep. Keeler  
Rep. Becker-Finn  
Rep. Urdahl

Authors: Sen. Lang  
Sen. Eichorn

### 2020-2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Establishes a waiver process to the State Building Codes and State Fire Codes for Indigenous individuals and organizations to revive traditional building practices.

### CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Supports the right of Indigenous people in Minnesota to build and live in traditional forms of housing.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Allows Indigenous people to live more sustainably and contribute to climate solutions in the age of climate crisis.

### TRIBAL SUPPORT

Minnesota tribes support this legislation. The ten tribes represented by the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and the Upper Sioux Community have passed resolutions of support for this bill, as have the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate in South Dakota.

### BACKGROUND SUMMARY

For thousands of years Indigenous people successfully designed, built, and inhabited our own homes. It is only in the last half century that the State of Minnesota passed building codes affecting Indigenous people's right to build according to our cultural traditions.

In 2019, the Dakota nonprofit Makoce Ikikcupi (Land Recovery) purchased 21 acres of land in Granite Falls through settler donations to establish a culturally-oriented and sustainable community. As part of our recovery of traditional knowledge, we began constructing Dakota earthlodges, a practice recently revitalized on the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota. Earthlodges provide a perfect solution to our cold-weather climate and help preserve an ancient building tradition not regularly practiced by Dakota people since the mid-1700s in the Mille Lacs area. In September 2019, under authority of the State of Minnesota, the local building inspector issued Makoce Ikikcupi a Stop Work Order for lack of compliance with State Building and Fire Codes.

Given that we would have to change the architecture and design of our traditional structures to accommodate those codes, along with the Granite Falls city council, we believe the best solution is to establish a process for code exemption for Indigenous people revitalizing ancient practices. We believe that as the Original People of this land, we ought to be able to build according to our traditions.



## Powering Down in the Age Of Climate Crisis

Indigenous practices flourished on this land for thousands of years precisely because they were sustainable. As we all face a warming planet and an unpredictable future, now more than ever we need to strive toward a fossil-fuel free future.

Indigenous people seeking to recover ancestral practices rooted in natural law and sustainability should be supported by state and local governments rather than criminalized. We just want the freedom to live our culture and to live simply.

# THE CITY OF GRANITE FALLS AND MINNESOTA TRIBES SUPPORT THIS BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION.

## Aligning MN Legislation with International and U.S. Laws

Dakota spirituality is intertwined with Dakota culture, including the design, building, and habitation of our homes and gathering places. Our building traditions are inseparable from our culture and spirituality.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ensures our right to promote, develop, and maintain our distinct customs and practices. In addition, the U.S. American Indian Religious Freedom Act recognizes the connection between religion and culture and protects our right to freely exercise our religion.

MN laws should be in support of Indigenous rights, rather than in conflict with international and federal law. It should not be illegal for Indigenous People to practice our spiritual and cultural traditions.



**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR RIGHT TO PRACTICE OUR CULTURE. SUPPORT HF1042/SF1087 .**



**Makoce Ikikcupi (Land Recovery) is a Project of Reparative Justice.**

For further information visit [makoceikikcupi.com](http://makoceikikcupi.com) or send an email to [makoce.ikikcupi@gmail.com](mailto:makoce.ikikcupi@gmail.com).