



WHITE EARTH RESERVATION

CHAIRMAN Michael Fairbanks SECRETARY-TREASURER Michael LaRoque
DISTRICT I Henry Fox DISTRICT II Eugene Sommers DISTRICT III Laura Lee Erickson

March 24, 2026

Attn: Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy
Minnesota Legislature

RE: HF 3898 Pesticide Protections for Wild Rice

Dear Co-Chairs Hansen and Anderson, and Committee Members

The White Earth Nation would like to first thank you for the opportunity to share our support for HF 3898. The White Earth Nation is joyful for the potential statewide protections of our precious Manoomin (wild rice). Wild rice beds are continually diminishing without adequate protections in place. HF 3898 recognizes the importance of wild rice to exist for future generations by protecting Manoomin against unscrupulous pesticide use in wild rice waters. The White Earth Nation would like to take this opportunity to highlight the significant importance of wild rice, Manoomin, to our Nation, as well as current threats and challenges that wild rice faces throughout Minnesota. Our intention is to continue to strengthen any laws protecting Manoomin.

Cultural Significance

The Anishinaabeg carry with them a migration story, as people originally from the east coast, they were told from the Creator to move westward till you find the food that grows on water. This is the reason why the Ojibwe people inhabit the upper Midwest, including northern Minnesota. Since the move to the new homeland, Ojibwe people have harvested and still harvest Manoomin the same traditional way; by canoe, push pole to propel and steer, and two flails to knock the rice into the boat. This continued tradition, passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years, is still strong in the people of the White Earth Nation. Today, the White Earth Nation has hundreds of citizens who partake in harvesting wild rice each day during the harvest season. The connections between the water, rice, and Anishinaabe are still very prevalent and strong. Anishinaabeg people live by the philosophy “that if we care for the Nibi (Ojibwe word for water) and Manoomin, the Manoomin will care for us” (Wild Rice Legislative Report 2023). The harvesting of wild rice is more than a lifestyle, it is inextricably woven into who we are as Ojibwe people, as the White Earth Nation.

Economic Importance

During the harvest season, the White Earth Nation buys green, unprocessed wild rice from its rice harvesters to sell to its citizens at a well below market rate. This program injects millions of dollars into our tribal economy as well as ensuring that members, especially our elders, can obtain their traditional, healthy, staple food source at a very low and affordable cost. Many of our people live on or below the National poverty level. Just before the winter months, the millions of dollars that are incorporated into the local economy ensure that people’s homes are equipped for the cold and they can purchase propane, cords of wood, etc. This money also ensures that the future of our Nation, our children, are ready for the school year with new school clothes and supplies. Even today in our modern world, the White Earth Nation has hundreds of citizens that rely on mother nature to care for them economically and for sustenance.

Threats and Challenges

As an indicator species or wetland health, wild rice faces many challenges in today's world. The ongoing effects of climate change and current land uses play a major role in the viability of rice beds throughout Minnesota. The life cycle of wild rice is susceptible to changing temperatures, excessive nutrients, and pollution. However, the real killer is in plain sight, the real reason this bill is so important to us, is that Tribal Nations find themselves facing State agencies who permit non-tribal members to actively destroy rice beds within our borders. For example, the MN DNR issues Aquatic Plant Management permits throughout Minnesota, primarily so that dock owners can remove weeds to access the water. These permits are obtained through an application process and unfortunately, all too often, they allow for the mechanical and chemical removal of wild rice! Sometimes, these permits are issued while the White Earth Nation is actively trying to restore rice beds! These actions directly affect the ability of tribal members and non-member harvester's to adequately harvest wild rice. This bill would protect wild rice against chemical removal and is greatly needed.

Another threat to wild rice that we have seen is land use changes. On our western borders of the Reservation, where the most intense agriculture occurs, we have noticed Manoomin's habitat is shrinking. It once used to stretch beyond the western boarder but with intensive agriculture now occupying the west, we've noticed the wild rice has disappeared. The aptly named Wild Rice River bisects the White Earth Reservation and once contained abundant beds of Manoomin. Now, the western portion of the river no longer supports wild rice growth. One must look to the east with the forests for protection to find flourishing wild rice. We know that land use changes and practices are having a direct impact on Manoomin and to prevent further shrinking of wild rice beds, it needs better protections.

This testimony is a short explanation of the importance of the Manoomin to the White Earth Nation as well as some of the threats and challenges that wild rice faces daily but it is by no means exhaustive. We could go on further about the importance of Manoomin and all the challenges facing it. We call on you to please support the passage of HF 3898 because this bill protects against pesticide use that poisons Manoomin. The time to act is now; before it's too late.

Miigwech (thank you),



Chairman Fairbanks (Mar 24, 2026 10:14:19 PDT)

Michael Fairbanks
Chairman
White Earth Nation

ORGANIZATIONAL SIGN-ON LETTER SUPPORTING WILD RICE ACT

Minnesota State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

To the Honorable Members of the Minnesota Legislature,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our strong support for greater protections for Wild Rice and freshwater within our state. Wild Rice is central to Minnesota's economy, cultural traditions, and biodiversity. We call on the legislature to pass legislation that will address the following issues:

[SF 3915](#) | [HF 3898](#) Pesticide Provision: Pesticides do not belong in Wild Rice waters, and our pesticide statutes governing this should be revised. Pesticides are not part of a healthy food system; these chemicals are poisoning the land, water, and our bodies. Restricting pesticide use in our Wild Rice waters is a major step in the right direction toward addressing this issue.

[SF 3748](#) | [HF 3896](#) Responsible Boating Practices: Irresponsible boating damages Wild Rice waters. We need restrictions to prevent the operation of motorized watercraft directly through uncultivated wild rice beds (except for hand-propelled boats, skiffs, or canoes), and for no-wake zones.

[SF 3749](#) | [HF 3899](#) Recognition of Inherent Rights of Wild Rice: The State of Minnesota should recognize the inherent right of Wild Rice to exist and thrive in our state! Wild Rice is a treaty-protected food and must be considered first, every time and for every permit, in our state.

[SF 3916](#) | [HF 3897](#) Wild Rice Risk Justification: Whenever a proposed project could harm Wild Rice waters, there should be a risk-justification process that includes tribal government input to assess how the project could cause harm.

Uncultivated Wild Rice Is a Crucial Minnesota Economic Driver. According to Earth Economics report *The Food That Grows on Water*, “the annual wild rice harvest results in \$12.5 million in expenditures, and the sale of hand-harvested *manoomin* supports more than \$19.2 million in annual income for tribal harvesters. The annual spending associated with *manoomin* harvesting (gas, equipment, supplies) supports about 153 local jobs, and the annual income generated by the sale of *manoomin* supports an additional 125 jobs.” This past year the impacts of mass precipitation events on Wild Rice across our state were devastating; many ricing areas were washed out due to intense rainfall in the spring. We must work together to ensure this sacred plant remains an economic staple within our state.

Uncultivated Wild Rice is a keystone species. What happens to this native plant reverberates throughout the web of life. According to the MNDNR's report on Natural Wild Rice, “No other

native Minnesota plant approaches the level of cultural, ecological, and economic values embodied by this species. More than 17 species of wildlife listed in the MNDNR's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy as 'species of greatest conservation need' use wild rice lakes as habitat for reproduction or foraging." Wild Rice produces oxygen that fish need to survive, filters out the nutrients that fuel midsummer algae blooms and fish kills, and provides food, shelter, and nesting areas for fish, invertebrates, and wildlife. Protecting Wild Rice protects essential biodiversity within our state.

Wild Rice is protected by treaties. To acquire part of the land that is now Minnesota, the United States made a treaty promise in 1837 that Ojibwe tribes could exercise "the privilege of hunting, fishing, and gathering the Wild Rice" within the ceded territory. Under the U.S. Constitution, treaties are the "supreme law of the land" and must be respected by states. This legislation would ensure that Minnesota protects Wild Rice and freshwater for all to enjoy for generations to come.

Wild Rice (*manoomin* in Ojibwe and *psiy* in Dakota) is sacred, and central to Ojibwe and Dakota culture, traditions, and ceremonies. Over a thousand years ago, the third of seven prophets instructed the Anishinaabeg to journey west from near the Atlantic coast, to where they would find "the food that grows on the water," and on faith, they walked to the land of 10,000 lakes and surrounding regions. *Manoomin* symbolizes their ancestors' journey, their relationship to the land, and philosophy of caring for both water and Wild Rice.

Wild rice was once abundant throughout Minnesota, but due to human activities it no longer flourishes, particularly in the southern part of the state. This decline in Wild Rice has led to a loss of cultural traditions for our Dakota relatives. Minnesota's pristine freshwater systems are home to the largest Wild Rice population in the United States. But Wild Rice is endangered as it faces mounting threats from invasive species, climate change, water pollution, and development. Together, we have the power to address the damage we've caused to our waters and restore Wild Rice to regions where it traditionally thrived.

The cultural, economic, and ecological significance of Wild Rice is irreplaceable. It must be safeguarded, ensuring that both current and future generations can continue to benefit from this sacred plant and the clean waters it requires. We, the undersigned organizations, strongly urge you to support this crucial legislation and work towards its passage with bipartisan unity. By doing so, we protect a legacy that nourishes both people and the land.

Miigwech / Pilámaya / Thank you

The undersigned organizations and their authorized representatives hereby express their full support for this movement:

Julia Nerbonne | Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light

Jessica Intermill | Intermill Consulting

Kate Winsor | Northeast Metro Climate Action

Dawn Goodwin | R.I.S.E Coalition

Maggie Schupert | CURE

Matt Norton | Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness

Paula Macabee | Water Legacy

Wallace Wadd | East Metro EcoFaith Collaborative

Sherri Knuth | Act For the Earth Team at Unity Unitarian Church

Andy Pearson | Three Waters Pipeline Resistance Team

Avonna Stark | Clean Water Action

Pouya Najmaie | Cooperative Energy Futures

Jean Ross | Vote Climate

Mary Keepers | Creekside United Church of Christ

Tom Grotewohl | Protect the Porkies

John Stoez | Repair Communities for Makoce Ikikcupi

Theresa Keaven | Climate Land Leaders

Tracy Molm and Whitney Wildman | Climate Justice Committee

Tish O'Dell | Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund

Rhonda Conn | Synergy Development Solutions

Ernest Oppegaard-Peltier III | Mukwa

Terri Burner | Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance

Dr. Ry O Siggelkow | Leadership Center for Social Justice at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Tom Uecker | NE MN ELCA Eco Faith

Emily Levang and Gwiiwizens: Ricky Defoe | Wankam: People for the Estuary

Peggy White | NEMN Synod of the ELCA EcoFaith Leadership Team

Tammy Walhof & Jacob Summerville | Lutheran Advocacy-MN

Bruce Garbisch | NE MN SNOD ELCA ECOFAITH NETWORK

Dr. Diane Jacobson | St. Paul Area Synod Care of Creation Team

Laura Scholl | Metro Blooms

Megan Bond | MN DFL Environmental Caucus

Melissa Baker Roach | Iron Ranger Partnership for Sustainability

Sue Lyback | North East Minnesota Synod Eco Faith Team

DeeDee Edlund | Edina Community Lutheran Church Eco Faith Team

Marylenn Torkelson | Wild Ones Prairie Edge Chapter

Michael Chameides | Rural Democracy Initiative

Tee McClenty | MN350 Action

Jessica Engelking | Great Plains Action Society

Nancy Carpenter | Beyond Land Acknowledgement/First UCC Northfield MN

Helen M. Pohlig | Indigenous Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team of Unity Church Unitarian

Rachel Holmes | Mills Church

Reverend David Carlson | Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Beth Tamminen | Climate Action Team, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Duluth

Kelley Skumautz | Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

Robert Scheierl | Wes Libbey Northern Lakes Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America

Annie Contractor | Rural Progress

Ruth Dalager Buck | Grace University Lutheran Church, Minneapolis

Craig Sterle | MN Division of the Izaak Walton League of America Chapter

Julie O'Leary | Izzak Walton League of America–W.J. McCabe Chapter

Bridgette Weber | Axis Mundi Catering

Theresa Halverson-Lee | Department of Indian Work



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The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SEA-25-010

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Pueblo of Santo Domingo

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Ute Indian Tribe

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Larry Wright, Jr.
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska

TITLE: Establishing Support for recognizing the Rights of *Manoomin/Psínj*; a sacred plant that is central to Indigenous cultures in the Great Lakes region

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, NCAI Resolution #ANC-22-008, duly adopted at the 2022 Mid Year Convention in Anchorage, Alaska, establishes a policy for the National Congress of American Indians to support the rights of nature legal framework promoted by various Tribal Nations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, as an example, wild rice, known as *Manoomin* in Anishinaabemowin and *Psínj* in Dakota, holds profound cultural significance for Native peoples in the Midwest region and is essential to biodiversity and ecosystems health; and

WHEREAS, wild rice holds significant spiritual importance for American Indian communities, as it is not only a staple food but also an aspect of our inherent relationship to the Earth, rooted in Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and fundamental to our identity and ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Anishinaabeg Nations' treaties with the United States protect the inherent right and responsibility of the Anishinaabeg to harvest wild rice; and



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WHEREAS, protecting wild rice is not just an environmental concern, but a matter of honoring treaties, nourishing indigenous bodies and culture, and ensuring that future generations can continue to practice their traditional ways of life; and

WHEREAS, wild rice faces significant threats from climate change, invasive species, pollution, and other human activities, all of which collectively jeopardize its existence; and

WHEREAS, the wild rice plant is especially sensitive to water quality, and can be compromised by various activities, such as mining, as elements such as water flow and temperature are essential for wild rice growth, and preserving the integrity of the wetlands home to wild rice beds is vital to maintaining biodiversity and the overall health of aquatic environments; and

WHEREAS, wild rice is a key indicator of freshwater health, and wild rice lakes are vital ecosystems that support diverse wildlife and plant species; and

WHEREAS, protecting wild rice directly correlates to maintaining water quality and habitat integrity, as wild rice thrives in clean, nutrient-balanced waters; and

WHEREAS, waters home to natural wild rice beds sustain an intricate web of life and also support local communities that depend on healthy ecosystems, and safeguarding wild rice ensures the resilience of freshwater systems.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) supports recognizing the inherent rights of *Manoomin/Psínj* (wild rice) to exist and thrive under the same legal framework as the rights of nature recognized in NCAI Resolution #ANC-22-008.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.



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CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2025 Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, held November 16-21 at the Seattle Convention Center in Seattle, Washington, with a quorum present.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Macarro", written over a horizontal line.

Mark Macarro, President

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christie Modlin", written over a horizontal line.

Christie Modlin, Recording Secretary

To the Honorable Members of the MN legislature:

We write in support of stronger protections for wild rice and the freshwater systems that sustain not only this plant, but human beings and life across our state. Wild rice is central to the ecological health of Minnesota's waters and to the cultural survival of the First Nations who have lived here since long before Minnesota became a state. Recognizing wild rice's inherent right to exist and thrive, or SF 3749 and HF3899, and including Ojibwe and Dakota languages in state law, represents a meaningful commitment to ensuring that Minnesota's cultures endure.

This request is often misunderstood. We are not asking the state to grant rights to a plant, nor are we suggesting that wild rice is a person. Rather, we are asking the State of Minnesota to recognize wild rice's inherent right to exist and thrive because it is essential to the health of our waters, ecosystems, and communities. **Recognition of rights is different from granting rights. To recognize something means to identify something that has long existed and whose importance has long been understood. Wild rice has sustained ecosystems and human communities here for generations and can continue to for generations if we take care of our waters. The request before the state is simply to acknowledge that reality in law and policy.**

Such recognition would help guide Minnesota and its agencies to understand that protecting wild rice is inseparable from protecting the cultural rights of the First Nations whose treaties allowed for the creation of the State of Minnesota. These treaties remain the supreme law of the land. Respecting them means respecting the natural relatives that are central to those treaty rights.

When we work to protect treaty rights, we also protect life and ecological health for everyone in our state. Minnesota law already reflects similar aspirations. For example:

[Minnesota Statute 116D.01](#) declares the purpose of state environmental policy to:

- (1) encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between human beings and their environment;**
- (2) promote efforts that prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere while supporting the health and welfare of human beings; and**
- (3) enrich understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the state and the nation.**

Recognition of the inherent right of wild rice to exist and thrive is in line with this statute on environmental policy. Protecting wild rice is not only about protecting a plant. It is about protecting Minnesota's waters for all, honoring treaty obligations, and ensuring that the state's ecological and cultural foundations remain strong for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We urge the legislature to pass all legislation aimed at creating stronger protections for Minnesota wild rice and freshwater this year. Recognizing manoomin's right to exist and thrive also protects Minnesota's State Grain, our health, our

ecosystems, and future. We support the following legislation which is aimed at protecting wild rice and the waters that sustain us all.

1. [[SF 3749](#) | [HF 3899](#)] Updates Minnesota's "State Grain" Language to include *psíŋ* in addition to *manoomin* and a recognition of the Inherent Right of *Manoomin/Psíŋ* (Wild Rice) to Exist & Thrive in Minnesota.
2. [[SF 3748](#) | [HF 3896](#)] Encourages responsible boating practices by restricting motorized watercraft operation through natural stands of uncultivated wild rice, implementing no-wake zones near wild rice beds, and adding educational signage for wild rice waters.
3. [[SF 3916](#) | [HF 3897](#)] Requires a "Risk Justification" be conducted for projects which could damage Wild Rice waters.
4. [[SF 3915](#) | [HF 3898](#)] Bans the application of pesticides in and near Wild Rice waters.

Sincerely,

Organizations and their authorized Representatives:

Avonna Stark | Clean Water Action

Jennifer Garbow | University of Minnesota CFANS Tribal Engagement & Outreach Liason

Lea Foushee | George Crocker | North American Water Office

Evan Mulholland | Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Robert Shimek | Ganawenindidaa

Martin Jennings | Northwest Indian Community Development Center

Debra Topping | Rise Coalition

Richard Watson | Lutefisk Technologies Inc

Randy Finn | Leech Lake Financial Services

Christina Hausman Rhode | Voyageurs Conservancy

Lori Cox | Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC

Chris Knopf | Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

Susan Ballot | Circle of Life Academy

John Siekmeier | Minnesota Division Izzak Walton League of America

Lucy Mullany | Minnesota Zero Waste Coalition | Eureka Recycling

Lori Olinger | Coalition for Plastic Reduction MN

Kate Winsor | Northast Metro Climate Action

Kathleen Shuler | Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

Jane Dow | Mankato Area Zero Waste and Beyond Plastics

Ella Rank, Joseph Johnson, Jo Schirling, Jaqlynn Spencer, Gabby Bennet, Olivia Janis, Bella

Bassat, Ian Roback, Elizabeth Watson, Nokomis Paiz, Chayse Cookson, Tyler Bailey, David

Lawrence Grant, Cassandra Smith, Sativa Warren, Devery Fairbanks, Nia Navarro, Mae

Davenport, Emi Ito, Justin Revenaugh, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, Emily Beverly, Hayley Orlowski,

Christof Zweifel, David L. Fox, Mark Shapley PhD, Jocelyn Currie, Jacqueline Hamilton,

Cathleen Torres Parisian, Hanna Sewell, Emma Schnieder, Clark Ward, Joel Barker, Crystal Ng,

Bill Grimm, Darlene St. Clair, Jessica Garcia Fritz, Saheli Patel, Lily Jarvis, Amelia Olson, Lucia

Kerkes, Lori Robinson, Uma Ashrani, Sophie Hanning, Diede Hein, Lou Miller, Sarah Francis

To the honorable members of the Minnesota Legislature:

The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) writes this letter in support of the Inherent Rights of Manoomin/Psínj legislation. We also support the host of other legislative actions that the Rise and Repair Alliance is working to bring forward that will uphold those Inherent Rights to exist and thrive.

The mission of MIAC is to protect the sovereignty of the eleven Tribal Nations that share geography with Minnesota and ensure the well-being of all American Indians throughout the state. MIAC is the official liaison between state and tribal government, and its executive board consists of the elected tribal leaders of the sovereign tribal governments. As the original stewards of the land in this region, we recognize the cultural and spiritual significance of Manoomin/Psínj (wild rice) and its essential role in the ecological balance of our state. This sacred plant has sustained our people for generations, and we must take immediate action to ensure its survival for future generations.

Wild rice holds significant spiritual importance for Indigenous Nations and communities, as it is not only a staple food but also central to their inherent relationships rooted in Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and fundamental to their identity and ecosystems. Indigenous wisdom teaches that water, plants, and animals are relatives who sustain life and deserve respect, not domination. Indigenous peoples have protected these lands and waters for thousands of years; now colonial systems of extraction threaten sacred traditions across treaty territories. Unless we act together, freshwater, wild rice, and our collective futures are threatened.

Beyond its cultural importance, Manoomin/Psínj is a keystone species essential for the biodiversity and health of Minnesota's ecosystems. The plant provides habitat for wildlife, stabilizes water systems, and contributes to the overall environmental well-being of our state. Recognizing the inherent right of Manoomin/Psínj to exist and thrive is not simply a matter of cultural preservation; it is a fundamental responsibility to protect the very essence of life in Minnesota. Wild rice thrives on clean water, just as we do, and our lives are deeply connected to this sacred plant. Protecting Manoomin/Psínj is not only a commitment to our heritage but to the future of all life that depends on the health of our land and waters.

Before statehood, wild rice covered the entire area that would become Minnesota. But today, threats to natural stands of wild rice are evident: climate change, invasive species, pollution, industrial agriculture, and pollen drift from hybridized cultivars all jeopardize the health of manoomin ecosystems. The very existence of this native plant is at stake. According to one study, the availability of wild rice for off-reservation tribal harvest has declined regionally by 5–7% annually. Wild rice is central to biodiversity within our state; loss of this plant will have deep impacts throughout ecosystems. Wild rice supports over 17 species in Minnesota listed as species of greatest conservation need. Studies have shown that wild rice plays a role in improving water quality by assisting in the removal of pollutants such as excess ammonia, nitrogen, and phosphorus. Proposed sulfide mining poses a significant threat to wild rice and Indigenous lifeways here in Minnesota.

Manoomin/Psij has continued to decline in abundance over the years, as noted by the Governor's Task Force on Wild Rice. These threats are all human-made. The rice isn't dying; Minnesota is killing it. It is our responsibility to take meaningful action to address the problems we have created and to protect this sacred plant. Manoomin/Psij is more than the state grain—it is a living relative that nourishes our people, our waters, and our way of life.


As the caretakers of the land and water, we have a sacred duty to protect and honor Manoomin/Psij as a living being with inherent rights to exist and thrive. We urge lawmakers to recognize and uphold the inherent rights of Manoomin/Psij to exist and thrive and to support the protections for wild rice and freshwater within our state brought forward by the Rise and Repair Alliance. It is essential to safeguard the health of our communities, the environment, and the well-being of future generations. We trust that the Minnesota Legislature will rise to the occasion and act in the best interest of all living beings in passing stronger protections for wild rice and freshwater within our state.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Respectfully,



Robert "Bobby" Deschampe, Chairman
Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
MN Indian Affairs Council



Shannon Geshick, Executive Director
MN Indian Affairs Council



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The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SEA-25-009

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Julius Murray
Ute Indian Tribe

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Ponca Tribe of Nebraska

TITLE: Requiring Free Prior and Informed Consent by Corporations, Companies, State and Federal Government Agencies Across the United States, and Globally

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is an international human rights standard that affirms the inherent sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that no action affecting their lands, territories, resources, cultures or livelihoods proceeds without their freely given consent; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Nations retain the inherent right to self-governance, control over their lands, resources, and cultural heritage, and the ability to make decisions that impact their homelands and treaty territories where Indigenous Peoples maintain the right to hunt, fish, and gather; and

WHEREAS, FPIC affirms that Tribal Nations retain the right to determine their development priorities and exercise self-determination in accordance with their cultural, social, economic, and political systems, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP); and



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WHEREAS, the principle of FPIC is supported by the United Nations and is affirmed in the UNDRIP as well as recognized by the international community as the minimum standard for survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples worldwide, for which the United States has formally expressed support; and

WHEREAS, FPIC requires that consent must be given voluntarily, without coercion, intimidation, or manipulation, and consent must be sought and at the earliest contemplation of a project, before any decision or action is taken and throughout the lifespan of the project when such action that may impact the rights, lands, resources, or livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, and such consent must be based on accurate and accessible information provided in a language and format that is understandable and culturally appropriate to the intended audience with the consent being explicit, specific, and documented, reflecting the genuine agreement of the affected Indigenous Peoples, taking into account that such consent can be revoked at any time; and

WHEREAS, FPIC must be obtained for all activities, projects, and initiatives that impact Indigenous Peoples rights, lands, resources, and livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, ensuring FPIC is utilized in any project impacting Indigenous Peoples prioritize the inherent rights and federally recognized sovereignty of Tribal Nations to self-governance and self-determination by allowing an impacted Tribal Nation to reject development that could negatively impact the health of its people and homelands; and

WHEREAS, FPIC should apply to all member-states that authorize activities that impact Tribal Nations and shall apply to all companies and government agencies involved in the planning and construction of any projects that may impact Tribal resources and the health of Native American and Alaska Native, thus empowering Tribal Nations to have the final say in protecting their people and resources; and

WHEREAS, FPIC must be sought when a project, such as a proposed mine, is located on, off, or near a reservation, Tribally-owned or controlled lands, ancestral homelands, and lands where Tribal treaty and statutory rights exist, but is close enough to contaminate a Tribal Nation's water supply, watershed, or resources in its treaty territory, allowing Tribal Nations to maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of their waters and resources; and

WHEREAS, FPIC ensures that companies and government agencies cannot bypass the concerns and objections of Tribal Nations by recognizing the importance of Indigenous Knowledge and stewardship of the land, and acknowledging Tribal Nations' inherent rights to protect their territories for the next generations; and



National Congress of American Indians | 1516 P St NW, Washington, DC 20005 | (202) 466-7767 | www.ncai.org

WHEREAS, Tribal Nations decide what projects and plans require their consent, especially any time an environmental impact statement or worksheet is required for a project located on or near a reservation, Tribally-owned or controlled lands, ancestral homelands, and lands where Tribal treaty and statutory rights exist, and any proposed polluting project near reservations and treaty territories must require FPIC before any state or federal permitting process commences; and

WHEREAS, the principle of FPIC upholds self-determination which recognizes and respects the inherent right of Indigenous Peoples to govern themselves, make decisions, and control their lands, resources, and cultural heritage.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians calls on the United States Congress, the legislatures of all of the states, and member-states to enact laws that require Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), while respecting American Indian and Alaska Native self-determination any time a project or development is located on or near reservation lands, Tribally-owned or controlled lands, ancestral homelands, and all other lands and waters where Tribal treaty and statutory rights exist; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of the NCAI and its member Nations until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2025 Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, November 16-21 at the Seattle Convention Center in Seattle, Washington, with a quorum present.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Macarro", written over a horizontal line.

Mark Macarro, President

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christie Modlin", written over a horizontal line.

Christie Modlin, Recording Secretary

Aquatic Herbicides for Aquatic Plant Control



This list of chemicals does not constitute endorsement of a particular product and is intended to serve only as a guide. Always review the product's label to determine suitability of the product and to ensure compliance with State and Federal Law.

Submersed Vegetation

| Plant (Common Name) <i>Scientific Name</i> | Endothall dipotassium - liquid (Aquatrol K) | Endothall dipotassium - granular (Aquatrol Super K) | Endothall amine - granular (Hydrothol 191 Granular) | 2,4-D Salt - granular (Aquaicide) | 2,4-D Ester - granular (Navigate) | Copper Sulfate (Chem One, Old Bridge, AB B rand) | Chelated Copper Compounds- granular (Cutrine Plus) | Chelated Copper Compound - liquid (Cutrine Plus) | Chelated Copper Compound (Komeen) | Glyphosate (Rodeo, Shore-Klear, Aqua Neat) | EPA Registered Dyes (Aquashade) | Endothall amine - liquid * (Hydrothol 191*) | Diquat dibromide (37.3%) * (Reward, Tribune, Dibrox) |
|---|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Bladderwort <i>Utricularia spp.</i> | N | N | N | P | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | N | C |
| Bushy Pondweed Naiad <i>Najas spp.</i> | C | C | C | P | P | - | - | - | P | N | N | C | C |
| Canada Waterweed <i>Elodea Canadensis</i> | N | N | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Claspingleaf Pondweed <i>Potamogeton richardsonii</i> | P | P | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | N |
| Coontail <i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i> | C | C | C | P | C | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Curlyleaf Pondweed <i>P. crispus</i> | C | C | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Flatstem Pondweed <i>P. zosterformis</i> | C | C | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Largeleaf Pondweed <i>P. amplifolius</i> | P | P | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | P |
| Narrowleaf Pondweed <i>Potamogeton spp.</i> | P | P | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Robbins Pondweed <i>P. robbinsii</i> | N | N | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | N |
| Sago Pondweed <i>Stuckenia pectinatus</i> | C | C | C | N | N | - | - | C | - | N | N | C | C |
| Variable Pondweed <i>P. gramineus</i> | N | N | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Watermilfoil <i>Myriophyllum spp.</i> | C | C | C | C | C | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Whitestem Pondweed <i>P. praelongus</i> | P | P | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Wild Celery <i>Vallisneria americana</i> | N | N | C | P | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | N |

Abbreviations: C = Control; P = Partial; N = No control; “-” = Not appropriate.

* Hydrothol 191 Liquid and Diquat dibromide (37.3%) products may be applied only by a Licensed Commercial Applicator within MN

Aquatic Herbicides for Aquatic Plant Control



This list of chemicals does not constitute endorsement of a particular product and is intended to serve only as a guide. Always review the product's label to determine suitability of the product and to ensure compliance with State and Federal Law.

Algae, Emergent & Floating Leaf Vegetation

| Plant (Common Name) <i>Scientific Name</i> | Endothall dipotassium - liquid (Aquatrol K) | Endothall dipotassium - granular (Aquatrol Super K) | Endothall amine - granular (Hydrothol 191 Granular) | 2,4-D Salt - granular (Aquatrol) | 2,4-D Ester - granular (Navigate) | Copper Sulfate (Chem One, Old Bridge, AB B rand) | Chelated Copper Compounds- granular (Cutrine Plus) | Chelated Copper Compound - liquid (Cutrine Plus) | Chelated Copper Compound (Komeen) | Glyphosate (Rodeo, Shore-Klear, Aqua Neat) | EPA Registered Dyes (Aquatshade) | Endothall amine - liquid* (Hydrothol 191)* | Diquat dibromide (37.3%)* (Reward, Tribune, Dibrox)* |
|---|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Arrowhead <i>Sagittaria spp.</i> | N | N | N | P | P | - | - | - | - | C | N | N | N |
| Burreed <i>Sparganium spp.</i> | C | C | N | N | N | - | - | - | - | C | N | N | N |
| Cattail <i>Typha latifolia</i> | N | N | N | N | N | - | - | - | - | C | N | N | C |
| Hardstem Bulrush <i>Schoenoplectus acutus</i> | N | N | N | P | P | - | - | - | - | N | N | N | N |
| Wild Rice <i>Zizania aquatica</i> | N | N | N | N | N | - | - | - | - | C | N | N | N |
| Duckweed <i>Lemna spp.</i> <i>Spirodela spp.</i> | N | N | P | P | P | - | - | - | - | N | N | P | P |
| Floating-leaf Pondweed <i>P. natans</i> | C | C | C | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | C | C |
| Water Shield <i>Brasenia schreberi</i> | N | N | N | N | P | - | - | - | - | P | N | N | N |
| Watermeal <i>Wolffia spp.</i> | N | N | P | N | N | - | - | - | - | N | N | P | N |
| White Waterlily <i>Nymphaea odorata</i> | N | N | N | P | P | - | - | - | - | C | N | N | N |
| Yellow Waterlily <i>Nuphar variegatum</i> | N | N | N | P | P | - | - | - | - | C | N | N | N |
| Filamentous Algae | - | - | C | - | - | C | C | C | C | - | - | C | P |
| Chara (Macroalgae) | - | - | C | - | - | C | C | C | N | - | - | P | N |
| Plankton Algae | - | - | C | - | - | C | C | C | C | - | - | C | - |
| Snails/Leeches <i>Swimmers Itch</i> | - | - | - | - | - | C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Abbreviations: C = Control; P = Partial; N = No control; “-” = Not appropriate.

* Hydrothol 191 Liquid and Diquat dibromide (37.3%) products may be applied only by a Licensed Commercial Applicator within MN

Legislative Response: Sustainable Foraging Task Force, DNR follow-up

Date: 12-15-2025

Prepared for: Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force

Question 1: Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe: How much does the state spend on herbicides to eliminate invasive terrestrial plants?

Answer: In 2024, in total, the DNR utilized approximately 6,163 gallons of liquid pesticides and 4,540 pounds of dry pesticides to treat approximately 35,196 acres of land. The table below summarizes department pesticide use by DNR Division:

| Division | Acres treated | Primary purpose | Gallons of liquid product | Pounds of dry product | Count of different products used |
|--|---------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Parks and Trails | 9,608 | Invasive plants, insects | 343 | 77 | 24 |
| Forestry; Division managed and/or utility licensed | 7,545 | Site preparation, release, Invasive plants, insects | 1,603 | 3,060 | 29 |
| Forestry; Ag leases | 4 | Weeds | <1 | 0 | 2 |
| Fish & Wildlife | 16,718 | Invasive plants, insects | 4,053 | 1,403 | 54 |
| Ecological & Water Resources | 1,321 | Invasive plants | 164 | <1 | 19 |
| Operations Services | n/a | n/a | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total DNR | 35,196 | | 6,163 | 4,540 | 128 |

The DNR uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to invasive species management. IPM is an ecosystem-based strategy for managing pests that focuses on long-term prevention of pests through a combination of methods, such as biological control, habitat manipulation, and modification of cultural practices. Pesticides are used only after all non-chemical treatment methods have been evaluated and monitoring indicates that they are needed. Then pesticide treatments are made with the goal of removing only the target pests.

Question 2: Peter Martignacco [Following up from the November 10, 2025 memo from DNR]: Were any of these permits issued for foraging on Wildlife Management Areas? Were any of these permits requested or issued for foraging ramps? Were any issued for commercial harvest? If so, how many permits were issued and can you estimate how much was harvested or allowed to be harvested under the permits?

[Information provided in the October 8, 2025 memo for reference]

State Forests: Most special product permits that the DNR Forestry Division issues are for fuelwood, spruce tops, balsam boughs, and Christmas trees. A summary of special product permits issued in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 and 2026 are as follows:

| Products | FY25 | FY26 | Notes |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|---|
| Ferns | 3 | 0 | Spring harvest |
| Other Herbaceous | 25 | 0 | Spring harvest, likely Solomon’s Seal, etc. |
| Ginseng | 63 | 70 | Fall harvest |
| Bark | 0 | 3 | |
| Total | 91 | 73 | |

Answer: Minn. Rules 6230.0250, Subp. 20 allows for the removal of “edible fruits or seeds and decorative portions of plants” for personal use on Wildlife Management Areas. No permits are issued for this personal harvest. Fuelwood harvesting permits are allowed at the discretion of the Wildlife Supervisor as a habitat management tool and processed through the Area Forestry Office.

The DNR Forestry Division can issue special product permits on Forestry-administered lands. Ramps had been identified as a species with resource sustainability concerns, so harvest was not permitted in FY25. No special product permits were issued for ramps in FY25.

Question 3: Senator Steve Green: How does the state define “large amounts” of berries, mushrooms, or dead fuelwood for personal use for a Special Products permit (as noted on DNR’s website, <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/harvest-permits-state-lands.html>)?

Answer: When requesting a permit, the applicant speaks with DNR Forestry staff to determine if a permit is needed and what is allowed for harvest on “state forest” lands. These permits are not available for State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, or other DNR managed lands.

After an internal project team review, DNR Forestry’s product and utilization standards were updated for clarity in June 2025. A person may harvest herbaceous plants, berries, nuts, seeds, chaga, and mushrooms, in a method that will not destroy the plant for personal use without a permit. Personal use does not have a volume measurement currently.

Fuelwood permits are limited to 12 cords of dead or down wood and live trees cannot be cut as fuelwood. These permits are for personal use only. Any amount of fuelwood over 12 cords or for commercial sale may only be sold on an informal timber permit to a qualified purchaser.

Question 4: Peter Martignacco: Do you need a permit to gather wood for fire when camping or recreating in a State Forest?

Answer: No permit is needed to collect dead fuelwood for fires to be used while recreating in a state forest.

Question 5: Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe: What plants, berries, mushrooms are currently allowed for commercial sale?

Answer: The DNR does not regulate what plants, berries, or mushrooms are allowed for commercial sale.

On state forest lands only, DNR's Forestry Division will issue special product permits for harvesting for personal use when it involves killing the plant, such as removing the roots or the entire plant, and for specific products. The Forestry Division will also issue special product permits for special forest products harvested for commercial use.

A special product permit minimum price is \$25.00. Some examples of current prices for commercial use:

- Many annual/perennial herbaceous plants can be harvested for \$1.00/gallon.
- Berries and nuts can be harvested for \$1.00/gallon.
- Most bark can be harvested for \$0.10/square foot.
- Mushrooms can be harvested for \$2.00/gallon.
- Sap to make syrups can be harvested for \$0.25/tap.

The Division of Forestry maintains a list of species and taxonomic groups found on state-administered forestlands that have been sold as special forest products and information on sale method(s) and land class(es) where harvest is allowed, product and harvest specifications, harvest recommendations to promote resource sustainability, and prices.

Protect Our Waterways and the homelands of our Manoomin/Psín by addressing the Pesticide Problem.

Preserve Our Future:

Support SF 3915 | HF 3898

Harmful pesticides are threatening the health of our rivers, lakes, and the essential ecosystems that rely on clean water. By supporting this crucial legislation, we can protect our natural resources, defend endangered species, and ensure a healthier environment for generations to come. Let's take a stand for our waterways and the precious wildlife that calls them home!



Mechanical removal of invasive species allows excess nutrients to be removed from water; reseeded with manoomin allows something to take that invasive plant's place, ensuring it does not regrow; and composting invasive plants allows nutrients to be cycled into our food systems. At this moment, the Gulf Region of the Middle East is responsible for supplying key nutrients, such as nitrogen, to crops. Ensuring that we have these nutrients from local sources and through sustainable processes is something MN can and must work towards. Protecting our local food sources is more important than ever! [Fertilizer isn't getting through the Strait of Hormuz, which could lead to a global food crisis. | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

Pesticides are a huge problem for our waterways and the pollinators:

Harmful pesticides are a massive problem for the waterways in our state. [One report by the National Resources Defense Council](#) confirms that,

- Over the 12 years of MDA sampling data available, 95% of the frequently sampled (i.e., 10 or more) flowing-water sites had at least one neonic chemical, and 87% of the sites showed a mixture of two or more neonic chemicals.”[1]
- The U.S.EPA's benchmark for harms to aquatic ecosystems was exceeded in more than half of all sampled years at roughly three-quarters of frequently sampled sites.
- Nearly all frequently sampled creeks and rivers show contamination levels lasting for several months. Concentrations are typically elevated in the spring, reflecting

the planting season, but depending on the location along the stream and distance to agricultural fields, maximum levels can also occur in late summer."

- "The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency predicted that continued, unchecked neonic use will likely push more than 200 threatened and endangered species toward extinction. The thin neonic coating **on just one small corn seed** can contain enough active ingredient to kill a quarter million bees or more. Research links neonics to neurological, developmental, and reproductive harms, including birth defects of the heart and brain." ([NRDC Factsheet](#))

Pesticides are a risk to our health:

- Neonics have been found in the bodies of more than 95 percent of pregnant women tested across the country, with levels increasing over the four-year [study](#)." ([NRDC](#))
- This problem is impacting **the health of unborn children**. "Pregnant women can pass neonics, via the [human placenta](#), directly to the developing fetus;
- Children are the most at risk from neonics. **Neonics have been measured in children's brain and spinal cord fluids, in blood, and in urine**, indicating that the pesticides can [gain access](#) to sensitive neural organs and tissues." ([NRDC FACTSHEET](#)) Studies link prenatal exposure to neonics with higher rates of birth defects of the heart and brain, and cognitive impairment. ([NRDC FACTSHEET](#))
- **Pesticides have been found in baby food. There could be up to 18 different toxic pesticides in one jar of baby food.**

The state of MN is actively applying pesticides to our waterways. [The MN DNR aerially sprays Glyphosate](#), a known poison, over wild rice waters! [This chemical](#) is known to kill all plants it touches. [The International Agency for Research on Cancer](#) has classified glyphosate as a potential carcinogen, and this chemical is at the center of [class-action lawsuits](#) across the United States. Companies responsible for its production have already paid out billions of dollars to victims who developed cancer after exposure.

We have better ways of dealing with the problem of invasive species. Mechanical removal allows plants to be removed along with the excess nutrients they absorb, and when the plants are removed, nutrients that could lead to fish kills from algal overgrowth are also removed. The removed plants and nutrients could be applied to farmland. Manoomin already faces many threats, so applying a poison known to kill it should never be an option.

Impact of Other Chemicals on Manoomin:

Other chemicals that are applied to MN waters through DNR permitting: diquat dibromide, Endothall amine, Glyphosate, Chelated Copper Compound, Chelated Copper Compound, Chelated Copper Compound, Copper Sulfate, 2,4-D Ester – granular, 2,4-D Salt - granular, Endothall amine - granular, Endothall dipotassium, Endothall dipotassium -

liquid. **According to the DNR's Aquatic Herbicides for Aquatic Plant Control, Glyphosate is known to kill wild rice!**

Small amounts of 2-4-D have significantly inhibited tiller, seedhead, and dry-weight biomass production in young wild rice. The dry weight of young wild rice was also reduced following exposure to endothall, diquat, and fluridone. ([Response of Wild Rice to Selected Aquatic Herbicides](#))

[Copper](#), a heavy metal, can be absorbed by the roots of wild rice plants.

Sulfate inhibits the growth of wild rice when it is reduced to toxic sulfide in aquatic ecosystems.

Sources: <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/EPA-HQ-OPP-2023-0420-0139>

Cited Resources

- Minneau, Pierre. "Neonic Pesticides in MN Waters." Their Contamination of and Threats to the State's Aquatic Ecosystems, vol. December 2024.
 - <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/neonic-pesticides-in-minnesota-water.pdf>
 - <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/neonic-pesticides-in-minnesota-water.pdf>
- Exposure to Contemporary and Emerging Chemicals in Commerce among Pregnant Women in the United States: The Environmental influences on Child Health Outcome (ECHO) Program
 - <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.1c0894>
 - <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/toxicology/articles/10.3389/ftox.2024.1438890/full#B99>
 - <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/toxicology/articles/10.3389/ftox.2024.1438890/full#B44>
 - <https://www.nrdc.org/media/human-health-risks-neonic-pesticides-7-questions-answered>
 - <https://foe.org/news/toxic-pesticides-still-present-in-targets-baby-food/>

Pesticide Issues DNR:

- [Glyphosate General Fact Sheet](#)
- https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/fish_wildlife/fisheries/apm/pests.pdf
- <https://www.iarc.who.int/featured-news/media-centre-iarc-news-glyphosate/>

- [Health Risk from Toxic Metals in Wild Rice Grown in Copper Mining-Impacted Sediments](#)
- [Role of Sulfate on Wild Rice Health.pdf](#)
- [Army Corps Response of Wild Rice to Selected Herbicides](#)

HF 3898

My Love Poem to the Capital

Life is short is what they say.
Working together is the good healing way.

We are here to protect and care for Mother
Earth.
It's our natural born instinct and duty since
birth.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge holds the wise
key.
Connecting with land and water in balance and
harmony.

Real wildrice is the original superfood.
It also has healing powers that can help
improve your mood.

The next seven generations will look at us as
living history.
Will they ever get rid of PFAS that
heartbreaking mystery.

Caring for the land and water means keeping it
clean.
Slow down on those poisons and toxins - you
know what I mean.

We've been asking to bring our healing drum but
your unjust policy says no.
Can we talk about this in a good way - it's
important you know.

All of our journeys brought us together today.
Peace, love, protect the water and wildrice is
what we humbly pray.

Love,
Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe
Water Warrior Woman



CLEAN WATER ACTION

PEOPLE • ACTION • JUSTICE

March 23, 2026

RE: HF3898 (Falconer) Support

Co-chair Hansen, co-chair Anderson, and members of the House Agriculture Committee, Clean Water Action Minnesota respectfully urges your support for HF3898 (Falconer), which would modify pesticide provisions to protect wild-rice water. The negative health and ecological impacts of pesticide use are widely recognized and understood, and to leave wild-rice waters unprotected against these chemicals poses a threat to our environment, human health, economy, and culturally significant watersheds.

The modifications proposed by HF3898 are straightforward: simply adding wild-rice waters to existing pesticide management conducted by the Pollution Control Agency and the Department of Natural Resources, which are the valued experts to conduct this management. While we would prefer “must” as opposed to “may” in the proposed legislation, we do appreciate and understand the flexibility provided by the proposed language to give the commissioners the utility and agency to determine how to best manage their jurisdictional pesticide management authority. We also deeply appreciate the addition of Minnesota Tribal governments in the pesticide management plan development process and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council in the coordination of pesticide management plans. Further, the inclusion of Tribal colleges in the continual revisions and updates of the pesticide applicator training manuals and examinations provides opportunity for those enrolled at Tribal colleges to be empowered to have greater input in the stewardship of their wild-rice waters.

Cited in the January 2024 Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Wild Rice Legislative Report, an economic contribution study conducted by the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council and the University of Minnesota Extension found Minnesota’s cultivated wild rice industry contributed \$58.4 million and 641 jobs to the economy in 2018, and stimulated an estimated \$33.4 million in economic activity in other industries across the state.¹ To fail to pass HF3898 would threaten nearly \$100 million in economic activity, which a common-sense economic analysis would deem fiscally unwise.

¹ *Wild Rice Legislative Report*. Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 18 Jan. 2024, p. 12, www.lrl.mn.gov/archive/minutes/senate/2024/ag/20240408/Ag_20240408_SF5308-Wild-Rice-Legislative-Report.pdf. Accessed 23 Mar. 2026.

In addition to the economic importance of wild-rice waters, those watersheds are culturally significant to tens of thousands of our native Minnesotans. The journey to find wild rice is at the core of the Ojibwe migration story and is the sacred food at the center of their cultural identity, spiritual traditions, and physical well-being. The Dakota had long been ricing prior to the arrival of the Ojibwe and shared their ricing traditions when the Ojibwe arrived; these traditional harvest and parching methods are still used by our native communities today.

HF3898 makes good on several of the recommendations outlined by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Wild Rice Legislative Report: allocating resources to prioritize wild rice conservation and preservation efforts; increasing effective communication with tribes; and expanding wild rice and cultivated wild rice education opportunities. It is our pleasure to state our agreement with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and respectfully urge your support of wild rice and HF3898 to extend pesticide provisions to protect wild-rice water.

Sincerely,

Avonna Starck

Minnesota State Director

astarck@cleanwater.org

Kyle Rosas

Minnesota State Deputy Director

krosas@cleanwater.org

March 24, 2026

Members of the House Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy
MN Legislature

Dear Co-Chairs Anderson and Hansen,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong favor of HF 3898, legislation that would take steps towards protecting Minnesota's wild rice waters from pesticide contamination.

Pesticide Action and Agroecology Network is a network-based organization dedicated to ending reliance on toxic pesticides and achieving health, justice, and resilience in food and farming. Our 1000+ members in Minnesota include rural Anishinaabe and Dakota residents who are already disproportionately exposed to hazardous agricultural pesticides used at high volumes near many Minnesota reservations.

Pesticide contamination of wild rice water poses an immeasurable risk to this vital cultural foodway. Wild rice thrives in low-sulfate environments, and thus a struggling wild rice population can signal when contamination from agricultural runoff is high. Research indicates that fertilizers and pesticides (particularly fungicides used commonly in potato production) outrank fossil fuels as the number one contributor to hazardous sulfur emissions in the environment.¹ The threat to Minnesota's wild rice waters from pesticides should be taken seriously.

PAN supports legislation to increase statutory protections around natural stands of wild rice and clarify tribal sovereignty over water.

We strongly urge the committee to vote in favor of HF 3898 and work to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,

Margaret Reeves
Senior Scientist
Pesticide Action & Agroecology Network

¹ Hinckley, Eve-Lyn S., et al. "A shift in sulfur-cycle manipulation from atmospheric emissions to agricultural additions." *Nature Geoscience* 13.9 (2020): 597-604.



1020 Innovation Lane | Mankato, MN 56001 | P: 763.235.6466
www.mcpr-cca.org

March 25, 2026

To: MN House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF 3898 – Wild Rice Pesticide Regulations

Minnesota Crop Production Retailers (MCPR) is a statewide trade association representing the agricultural co-ops and ag retailers in Minnesota.

MCPR opposes HF 3898, adding further pesticide regulations.

We are deeply concerned that the proposed legislation is broad in scope and may have unintended consequences. Production agriculture is critical to Minnesota's economy, and ensuring food security is a shared interest. We appreciate the desire to protect wild rice and recognize its cultural importance as a food source.

Minnesota has a highly developed regulatory landscape that builds on the science-based approach embodied in the federal framework for pesticide approval and registration. The proposed legislation seems to encompass a sweeping set of additional governmental responsibilities and complex intergovernmental enforcement strategies. We understand that additional training and awareness of the potential impacts on wild rice would be helpful, but we need to make those efforts clearer and better aligned.

Our ag retailers and industry partners remain committed to the responsible use of pesticides and to ensuring that products are used carefully in accordance with regulations and approved labels.

Again, thank you for your thoughtful consideration and ongoing support for agriculture in Minnesota.

Lee Helgen, Executive Director
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers

Boozhoo nindanawemagindog. Makak Ikwe nindizhinikaaz, Makwa nindoodem, Gazagaaskwaajimekaag nindoonjibaa. Hello, my relatives,. My name is Leanna Goose. I am of the Bear Clan, and I am from Leech Lake.

I am using the Anishinaabe language today to show that it is not only acceptable, but necessary to recognize that multiple cultures live here in Minnesota. Respecting those cultures in our laws and in these hearings matters. It is one way we ensure that cultural erasure does not continue at the hands of the state. Ensuring that Anishinaabe culture and lifeways are protected and respected is central to protecting life as we know it in this moment. According to the world Economic Forum, Indigenous Nations make up %5 of the global population yet their lands protect %80 of the world's remaining biodiversity. Indigneous nations are holding together the web of life, and this is because our cultures and lifeways are rooted in respect for the living beings we share this earth with.

This legislative action and the others brought forward to protect wild rice are about building relationships of respect between people and the earth that cares for us all. It is about recognizing a simple truth: when we care for the waters, they will care for us. When we care for the land, it will care for us.

I am an Anishinaabe mother, an organizer, and a facilitator with the Rise and Repair Alliance. I also work on a research project called *Protecting Manoomin for the Next Seven Generations*.

Wild rice is central to who we are as a people and as a state. It is our state grain, and it holds deep cultural, ecological, and historical importance. Wild rice faces many threats. The inherent rights language we brought forward requires the State of Minnesota to recognize that wild rice has a right to exist and thrive. This was not about granting personhood. The state already extends legal rights to corporations—this is not what we aimed to do. We are asking the state to recognize and protect a living system that is fundamental to our survival and the survival of many other species that call our state home. [MNDNR recognizes that wild rice supports over 17 species listed as species of greatest conservation need in our state.](#)

This pesticide language is a critical part of upholding wild rice's right to exist and thrive. It calls on the state to take responsibility and build a relationship with wild rice that is protective, not harmful. If the state claims to own the wild rice, then it must act to protect it. This legislation is a necessary step toward ensuring that protection.

Pesticides are poisons designed to kill plants, insects, and other “pests.” These chemicals are sprayed on our food, which we then consume. Wild Rice thrives without the use of harmful chemicals or fertilizers. It is truly a gift that must be respected and protected. We are calling on the state to begin addressing the impacts pesticides have on wild rice and our waters.

Pesticides are a major problem in Minnesota's waterways. A report by the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) found that 95% of surface waters tested positive for neonicotinoids, a class of pesticides harmful to pollinators. Pollinators are essential to our food systems. Neonicotinoids are also harmful to human health and the health of our children and the unborn. [A 2022 study](#)

found neonicotinoids present in **over 95% of pregnant women tested nationwide**, with concentrations increasing over time. These chemicals do not stay contained—they cross the placenta and reach developing fetuses. [Studies](#) have detected neonics in children’s **blood, urine, and even cerebrospinal fluid**, meaning they are reaching the most sensitive organs in the body. Children are especially vulnerable. Research has linked prenatal exposure to these pesticides with **birth defects of the heart and brain, and cognitive impairment**.

In the Anishinaabe language, pollinators are called *manidoosh*, or “little spirits,” reflecting the respect they deserve. Protecting them is part of respecting the web of life here in Minnesota. Without pollinators, we would struggle to grow food, and many pollinator species are already endangered. Addressing this issue is urgent.

We also call on the state to address invasive species in our waterways in ways that respect and protect wild rice. Currently, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources sprays glyphosate over waters where wild rice grows. Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum herbicide that kills most plants it comes into contact with, including wild rice—something the [DNR’s own pesticide](#) guidance acknowledges.

Aerially applying this chemical over natural food systems is harmful and irresponsible. It damages wild rice beds and the ecosystems that depend on them. I have spoken with a friend who lives on a lake where this spraying has taken place, and they describe a stark change—areas that were once full of life are now quiet and empty. The other pesticides approved by the MNDNR for use in our waterways are also shown in scientific studies conducted by the [Army Corps of Engineers](#) to harm wild rice at certain life stages.

When wild rice is lost, it is not just one plant that disappears. It means less food and habitat for the many species that depend on it, and a loss for all of us who share these waters.

On [Leech Lake](#), we are actively working to address invasive species without using harmful chemicals in our waterways. Instead, we are using mechanical removal methods. This summer, we will be removing invasive plants and reseeded manoomin in areas where invasives have taken over. The goal is simple: remove the invasive species and restore native plants in their place. If invasive species are not replaced with native plants, they will continue to return.

Relying on chemical spraying to manage invasive species creates a harmful cycle of repeated chemical use in our waters. This approach is not sustainable and it is also dangerous as it poses risks to the health of our ecosystems.

Our approach also turns a problem into a solution. The invasive plants we remove will be composted and used to support local food systems. This is especially important because chemical fertilizers are already causing serious harm to our waters—not only here in Minnesota, but downstream as well. Excess nutrients flow all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, contributing to a “dead zone,” where algal overgrowth depletes oxygen and creates waters that cannot support life. This is also happening here in Minnesota.

By removing invasive species like cattails and others, we are also removing excess nutrients from our waterways. These nutrients, instead of harming aquatic ecosystems, can be reused to strengthen local food systems. This creates a closed-loop system that supports both healthier waters and healthier communities.

This is a call to the State of Minnesota to stop killing the wild rice and invest in and support these kinds of solutions—approaches that restore balance, reduce pollution, and protect our natural food systems. Healthier food systems and healthier waterways go hand in hand, and they benefit all Minnesotans. Miigwech.



Minnesota House of Representatives

State Office Building

St. Paul, MN 55155.

March 24, 2026

To: Chairs Hansen and Anderson, and Members of the House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Subject: Support for SF 3915/HF 3898 – Modifying Pesticide Provisions to Protect Wild-Rice Water

Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and our thousands of members and supporters in Minnesota, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SF 3915/HF 3898.

Minnesota's identity is inextricably linked to its water. But for the avian world, these waters—specifically those supporting wild rice—are more than just a scenic backdrop; they are a life-support system. By strengthening oversight, enhancing Tribal cooperation, and accounting for the bioaccumulative effects of pesticides, this bill takes a critical step toward ensuring that Minnesota remains a safe haven for the hundreds of bird species that rely on our wetlands.

The Avian Crisis: Birds and Pesticides

Since 1970, North America has lost nearly 3 billion birds. While habitat loss is a primary driver, the pervasive use of modern pesticides is a silent contributor that degrades the quality of remaining habitat.

Pesticides impact birds through three primary pathways:

- **Direct Toxicity:** Many systemic pesticides, such as neonicotinoids, are acutely toxic. A single seed coated with these chemicals is often enough to kill a songbird outright.
- **Trophic Collapse-The Food Web Effect:** Most birds, including waterfowl and shorebirds that frequent wild-rice waters, rely on insects for protein, especially during the nesting season. When pesticides leach into surface waters, they decimate aquatic insect populations, effectively starving the next generation of birds.
- **Sublethal Impairment:** Many pesticides cause neurotoxic effects that impair migration, suppress their immune system, and reduce reproductive success.

Why This Bill is a Win for Minnesota's Birds

SF 3915/HF 3898 introduces several common-sense updates to Minnesota's pesticide statutes that align with the best available science and conservation practices.

1. Accounting for Bioaccumulation

One of the most vital additions of this bill is the requirement for the commissioner to determine the immediate and bioaccumulative impacts of pesticides. Birds are often at the top of the food chain. Chemicals that linger in the sediment and soil of wild-rice waters don't just stay there; they move up the chain from microorganisms to insects, to fish, and finally to birds like the Great Blue Heron or the Bald Eagle.

2. Protecting Critical Wild-Rice Water Habitats

Wild rice beds are high-octane fuel for migratory birds. They provide essential cover and nutrient-dense forage. By explicitly defining wild-rice water and ensuring that violations affecting these waters are not dismissed as minor violations, this bill creates a necessary deterrent against the negligent application of chemicals in our state's most sensitive ecological nurseries.

3. Tribal Cooperation and Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Birds do not recognize political boundaries. They fly across Tribal lands, state parks, and private farms. By mandating cooperation with Minnesota Tribal governments and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, this bill ensures a holistic approach to landscape-scale conservation. Furthermore, the emphasis on Integrated Pest Management (IPM)—prioritizing non-chemical solutions first—is the gold standard for bird-friendly land management.

When we protect wild-rice waters from chemical runoff, we are protecting the water quality for Minnesota families, honoring the cultural heritage of our Tribal partners, and ensuring the resilience of our natural economy.

Birds are the canaries in the coal mine to environmental degradation, their decline is a signal that our environment is becoming less hospitable. SF 3915/HF 3898 is a proactive, scientifically sound response to that signal.

We strongly urge a YES vote on SF 3915 / HF 3898.

Respectfully submitted,

American Bird Conservancy



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