



March 11, 2024

Representative Rick Hansen  
Chair, Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy  
10 State Office Building  
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard.  
St Paul, MN 55155

**Re: Support of HF 3651**

Dear Chair Hansen and members of the Committee:

Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light writes in support of House File 3651, a bill that would confirm the treaty right of federally recognized Ojibwe bands in Minnesota to establish big-game hunting seasons for band members.

Under the U.S. Constitution, treaties with tribal nations are the “supreme Law of the Land.”<sup>1</sup> They are the records of mutual exchanges of negotiated promises between tribes and the United States that take precedence over state law. Moreover, these treaties— and the rights they protect— can only be abrogated by the U.S. Congress. Where “Congress has not said otherwise, we hold the government to its word.”<sup>2</sup>

The Ojibwe bands within Minnesota (referred to as “Chippewa Bands” in the treaties) have enjoyed the right to hunt, fish, and rice since time immemorial. Even as these bands ceded to the United States the land that would become the State of Minnesota, these bands retained those usufructuary rights, including specifically negotiating for that protection. Indeed, the United States Supreme Court has confirmed that Congress never abrogated these Ojibwe usufructuary rights, so they remain in place today.<sup>3</sup>

Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light works is a statewide organization that works in partnership with multifaith communities and all Minnesotans to co-create a just and sustainable world. HF

---

<sup>1</sup> United States Constitution, Art. VI, Cl. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, 591 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2020).

<sup>3</sup> *Minnesota v. Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians*, 526 U.S. 172 (1999) (confirming the 1854 Treaty’s continued protection of usufructuary rights).

3651 recognizes Minnesota's obligation to follow these treaties. We stand in support of HF 3651 because we want to hold our government to its word.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Intermill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Intermill" being the most prominent part.

Jessica Intermill  
Strategic Policy Consultant  
MN Interfaith Power & Light