

April 2, 2025

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Subject: Personal Testimony in Support of: SF1247 The Wild Rice Act

Hello! My name is Dave Toutloff and I am an elder of the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe.

I am happy to provide our family story as it relates to the traditions and values of Wild Rice.

Our family has harvested and hand processed Manoomin (Wild Rice) for over 100 years, with my father harvesting from a canoe until he was 87 years old. We have mostly harvested the public waters around Ely, MN or Nett Lake (native -owned lake). The long-time tradition of the fall harvest is something that our entire family looks forward to. It is a time of hard work, beautiful fall days on the water, catching up with family and friends, and the reward of storing such precious, organic, gourmet food for the following years consumption.

When my grandfather, uncles, and dad first started harvesting wild rice there were many more lakes and rivers that grew beautiful stands of rice. Due to the many reasons identified and discussed in SF 1247, fewer of those waterways no longer have sustainable stands of rice to harvest. (Big Rice, La Pond and Hula Lake to name a few)

The harvest of wild rice has also had an economic value for our family and many others. I can remember growing up in Chisholm, MN and watching my father selling pounds of wild rice to friends and neighbors. He used the money to supplement his teachers' salary. Using the extra \$ to buy a needed household item or simply new school clothes for my brothers and me. Like most commodities, wild rice has increased to about \$20/lb. Currently our family and many others completely take wild rice from the waterway to the table. Harvesting, hand parching over an open fire, and winnowing by hand or machinery.

I hope that the efforts in motion will help sustain, prosper, and recover the waterways that our family and many Minnesotans rely on for wild rice harvesting.

Chi Meegwetch!

Dave Toutloff

