

Boozhoo, my name is Leanna Goose, I am from Leech Lake. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SF 1247 the wild rice act, Psin kin yanka (dakota) Ganawendam Manoomin (Ojibwe). I am a co-facilitator and organizer within the Rise and Repair Alliance, as well as a contributor to a research project called *Protecting Manoomin for the Next Seven Generations*. As an Anishinaabe mother, I have witnessed the heartbreaking loss of wild rice firsthand. The rice beds I grew up with are no longer the same rice beds I am introducing my children to, and many of them are struggling. I have taken action on a local level and have included some information and pictures from our work on Leech Lake to help you understand the loss firsthand and the work we are doing to help. I am respectfully asking our legislators to bring forward meaningful action at the state level to ensure that wild rice remains for the next seven generations for the following reasons.

Wild rice is a remarkable food that requires no pesticides, no fertilizers all it needs is clean water and a shallow area to thrive. It is one of the world's most sustainable food sources. Wild rice is a keystone species, playing a central role in maintaining the health and balance of our ecosystems. Wild rice is crucial to Minnesota's biodiversity, and plays a significant role in our state's economy. Minnesota contains more wild rice than any other state in the U.S., and that is something worth protecting.

Wild rice is more than a food source to the Indigenous communities in Minnesota; it is central to Anishinaabe and Dakota culture and traditions. This plant is our people's connection to the land, water, and our ancestors. Tribes have fought and worked hard to protect this sacred food source and will continue to, but the threats that this plant faces now require collective actions to address.

Wild rice faces numerous threats from climate change, pollution, invasive species, and boating. When these threats combine, they jeopardize the very existence of this sacred plant. Wild rice was once abundant across the northern part of the United States, east of the Rocky Mountains. However, due to human activities, this is no longer the case. If humans are at the root of these challenges, then we also have the power to be the solution.

In Anishinaabe culture, we understand that our survival is intricately linked to the health of plants, animals, and water. We show respect for these living beings through our cultural practices. It is this same respect that we aim to bring to all of Minnesota, with this bill. Incorporating Indigenous wisdom into our modern world is a solution to the climate crisis.

We recognize and appreciate the love Minnesotans have for their waters. This legislation is not a call to end boating but it is a call for a respectful coexistence between two cultures. Just as we wouldn't drive a car through a farmer's cornfield, the same level of respect should be applied to this treaty-protected food. Many tribes are actively working on restoration efforts to preserve wild rice, but these efforts can be quickly uprooted by a boat driving through a wild rice bed or creating a large wake that uproots the plants.

Wild rice absorbs excess nutrients, helping to prevent harmful algal blooms that can lead to fish kills. At the same time, it provides oxygen to the waters through photosynthesis, which supports the survival of fish and other aquatic life. Manoomin has helped Minnesota throughout the generations and now is the time that we need to stand together to help manoomin. This plant is not only central to tribal food sovereignty, but also to the food sovereignty of Minnesota and the United States. We ask that you work together to swiftly pass SF1247. Miigwech Bizindawiyag thank you for listening.