



April 2, 2025

RE:

SF 1247 (Kunesh) Pesticide provisions modification to protect wild rice waters
Linda Newman, Business Owner/Wild Rice Harvester
In Support of SF1247

Senator Hauschild,

First, I again want to thank you for seeing a group of us on March 12th when we participated in the Rise & Repair Rally. I took three days out of my peak dog sledding tour business season to drive 6 hours each way, to see you in support of the Wild Rice Act SF1247 because it is that important to me and others in my area.

A second whole-hearted thank you is for hosting a LIVE Town Hall in Grand Marais recently where I, again, spoke with you about the Wild Rice Act. It takes courage to step out in the current political climate and meet with your constituents. As we've seen, not everyone has that courage.

I learned to harvest Manoomin roughly 8 years ago from a Grand Portage Elder with other influences and education from Elders in Fond Du Lac. Being out in the pristine wilderness, harvesting wild rice just 4/10th of a mile from my off grid homestead, nestled in the middle of the Grand Portage State Forest and the Superior National Forest, is a spiritual experience for me. It is also becoming a more rare activity, even for some Indigenous communities given that our wild rice beds are in decline due to a number of circumstances that the Wild Rice Act bill notes. I rely on Wild Rice as a staple in my diet and save 50lbs each harvesting season for myself to get through the year. Having a gluten sensitivity, I appreciate the nutrients provided in Wild Rice.

Manoomin is the foundation of life in the culture of our Indigenous communities. When original migrating was taking place, the Ojibwe were told to go to the place where food grows on the water. That's here! Wild Rice only grows naturally in MINNESOTA, Wisconsin and Michigan. Anywhere else it is patty grown. My understanding is that patty grown rice is genetically different and fits in the category of GMO foods. We need to protect our natural crop of Manoomin for generations to come!

Did you know that the natural Manoomin is also very diverse depending upon the body of water in which it is growing? First, the water cannot be deeper than around 7' or the crop will flood out entirely. River rice has to be adapted to a current and the grain is typically smaller in size. Lake rice varies in width and length depending upon the



location. And, just like nectar from different flowers is made into different tasting honey by honey bees, location of the Manoomin brings noticeable differences in taste. Wild rice is also higher in protein than any other grain. Its nutrients are balanced and complex, having kept Indigenous people healthy for many, many generations.

At one time, each person in the village was in need of 100lbs of raw Wild Rice per year to fulfill their nutritional needs. That is no longer available to most. We need to change this by protecting Manoomin.

And one last reminder of many, that I am inviting you to come and learn to harvest Wild Rice/Manoomin/Psin with me this harvesting season. The season typically begins in my area the end of August and ends around the middle of September. I hope to see you!

Senator Hauschild, please support the SF 1247. It would mean the world to so many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike who not only harvest it but have it as a staple in their diets.

Very Sincerely,

Linda K. Newman

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