

My name is Rachel Bly, and I live in the Cooper neighborhood of Minneapolis. I'm testifying today in support of the Wild Rice Act. I am a nurse, a chaplain in training, and I come from settler ancestors who farmed the land in Northern Minnesota and Illinois. The connections between food, health, and the environment are undeniable. I previously worked with cancer patients, and in Minnesota, colon cancer has been on the rise in the 20-49 year old range since 2006 according to the MN Department of Health.<sup>1</sup> A poor diet is a known risk factor for colon cancer, and it is essential that we care for the earth so that we may care for all living things.

I believe that the Wild Rice Act is so important because it helps all of us to recognize wild rice as a part of us, a sacred example of our interconnectedness with the earth. We must take preventative action to protect Wild Rice similar to how necessary preventative cancer screenings are to caring for our bodies. I urge you to pass SF 1247 / HF 2134 the Wild Rice Act to secure this knowledge in our state laws and protect wild rice for all future Minnesotans. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/mcrs/docs/colorectalff.pdf>