



161 Rondo Avenue, Suite 919
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55113

January 10, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the Minnesota State Legislature,

The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) writes this letter in support of the Rights of Manoomin/Psín legislation being introduced this year. The mission of MIAC is to protect the sovereignty of the eleven Tribal Nations that share geography with Minnesota and ensure the wellbeing of all American Indians throughout the state. MIAC is the official liaison between state and tribal government and its executive board consists of the elected tribal leaders of the sovereign tribal governments. As the original stewards of the land in this region, we recognize the cultural and spiritual significance of Manoomin/Psín (wild rice) and its essential role in the ecological balance of our state. This sacred plant has sustained our people for generations and it is critical that we take immediate action to ensure its survival for future generations.

Manoomin/Psín is a cornerstone of our traditions, our way of life, and our identity. Beyond its cultural importance, Manoomin/Psín is a keystone species, essential for the biodiversity and health of Minnesota's ecosystems. The plant provides habitat for wildlife, stabilizes water systems, and contributes to the overall environmental well-being of our state. We assert that recognizing the rights of Manoomin/Psín is not simply a matter of cultural preservation; it is a fundamental responsibility to protect the very essence of life in Minnesota. Wild rice thrives on clean water, just as we do, and our lives are deeply connected to this sacred plant. Protecting Manoomin/ Psín is not only a commitment to our heritage, but to the future of all life that depends on the health of our land and waters.

Today, Manoomin/Psín faces numerous existential threats, from climate change and invasive species to pollution and habitat degradation. According to the Governor's Task Force on Wild Rice, the abundance of Manoomin/Psín has already significantly declined in recent decades. These threats, largely driven by human activities, demand that we take responsibility for the damage caused and work together to reverse the harm we have inflicted.

As the caretakers of the land and water, we have a sacred duty to protect and honor Manoomin/Psín as a living being with inherent rights to exist and thrive. This legislation represents a critical step in securing those rights and safeguarding the future of this sacred plant, our communities, and our environment.

Manoomin/Psín is not only the state grain of Minnesota, but a cornerstone of our economy, providing essential sustenance and significant economic benefits that support communities and the future prosperity of our state. We urge lawmakers to take bold action and pass the Rights of



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Manoomin/Psíg legislation in order to protect this vital resource. By doing so, you will honor our people's ancestral connection to the land, treaty rights, and ensure that this sacred plant can continue to exist and thrive, for generations to come.

The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council strongly endorses this legislation and call for its swift passage. We trust that the Minnesota State Legislature will rise to the occasion and act in the best interest of our people, our environment, and the sacred Manoomin/Psíg.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this critical matter.

Respectfully,

A blue ink signature of Robert L. Larsen, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

President Robert L. Larsen
Lower Sioux Indian Community
Board Chairman
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

A blue ink signature of Shannon Geshick, featuring a series of overlapping loops and a horizontal line at the end.

Shannon Geshick
Executive Director
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council