



Friends of Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas

A Minnesota Non-profit, Tax-exempt Corporation
www.snafriends.org

April 23, 2025

Via e-mail only
elspeth.cavert@mnsenate.gov

Senator John Marty, Chair, and
Senate Finance Committee

Re: SF 2077 – MN Sustainable Foraging Task Force: **Request for Four Amendments**
For Committee Hearing, Thursday, April 24, 2025 (8:30 a.m.)

Dear Chair Marty and Senate Finance Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SF 2077 (1st engrossment), within which establishes the Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force.

Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas is a Minnesota non-profit, tax exempt corporation whose mission is to advocate for the establishment, use, management, and perpetuation of Minnesota's scientific and natural areas in an undisturbed natural state.

Our mission is consistent with the legal purpose – and administrative requirements - of the scientific and natural areas program:

“State scientific and natural areas; purpose; resource and site qualifications; administration; designation. (a) A state scientific and natural area shall be established **to protect and perpetuate in an undisturbed natural** state those natural features which possess exceptional scientific or educational value.”
[Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 5(a). Emphasis added.]

"State scientific and natural areas **shall** be administered ... in a manner consistent with the purposes of this subdivision to preserve, perpetuate, and **protect** from **unnatural** influences the scientific and educational resources within them."
[Minn. Stat. 86A.05, Subd. 5(c). Emphasis added.]

Therefore, **state law does not allow foraging on scientific and natural areas.**

Amendments #1 and #2

We are supportive of language in SF 2077 (1st engrossment, lines 155.20-.22) to “... develop recommendations for science-based, including traditional ecological knowledge, foraging guidelines for state lands ...” However, based on the statutory requirements stated above, **we respectfully request that state scientific and natural areas be exempted from the bill.**

Also, we share the concern that the present language would allow the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources until the data supports otherwise. Therefore, instead, we request lines 155.20-.22 be amended to adopt the precautionary principle: to allow foraging activities only where supported by the data.

Combining the above concerns, **we respectfully request the following amendments to lines 155.20-.22:**

“3) develop recommendations for science-based, data-driven foraging guidelines for state lands, **except scientific and natural areas** that balance public access with conservation needs, **setting limits on allowing** foraging activities only where supported by data ...”

Amendment #3

Please **delete** the following language in SF 2077, 1st engrossment, lines 156.22-.24:

“MORATORIUM ON FORAGING RULES. The commissioner of natural resources shall not commence or complete any rule making on foraging before July 1, 2027.”

This language, if adopted, would hamstring the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources from adopting any rule that would protect a natural resource until July 1, 2027.

Amendment #4

We also support the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources’ statement in their letter to you dated April 16, 2025:

“DNR does have concerns with several policy provisions in the bill and we would like to continue work with the Senate on these items. These include:

“The Foraging Task Force language in the bill gives a majority voice to consumptive users of public lands while excluding the voices of those who use public lands for non-consumptive purposes. We would like to work with the Senate to ensure that all voices have a seat at the table.”

Senate Finance Committee
April 23, 2025

On behalf of Friends of MN Scientific and Natural Areas and the undersigned, I **thank you** for your kind consideration.

Very truly yours,

Thomas E. Casey

Thomas E. Casey, Board Chair
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas, Inc.

Please send reply to:
2854 Cambridge Lane
Mound, MN 55364
(952) 472-1099 (telephone)
tcasey@frontiernet.net

TEC/tc

The following organizations have signed onto this letter:

Pollinator Friendly Alliance



Izaak Walton League of America – Minnesota Division



Terry Gips, President
Alliance for Sustainability