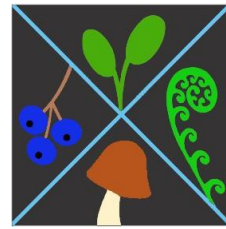


April 23, 2025

Senator Marty Chair and Finance Committee Members



MINNESOTA
FORAGING
ALLIANCE

Dear Chair Marty and Committee Members

On behalf of the Minnesota Foraging Alliance, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate File 2077 which establishes the Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force. This initiative presents a meaningful opportunity to ensure sustainable, equitable access to Minnesota's diverse natural resources, guided by robust scientific data and sensitivity to cultural and traditional practices and other land users. Most of all, we are committed to ensuring a transparent process in determining policy for access to and the protection of state lands for foraging activities.

Our members deeply value Minnesota's lands, recognizing that foraging is far more than simply gathering wild foods. It is a practice deeply rooted in tradition, culture, and develops a profound connection to our natural environment. Responsible and sustainable foraging is sometimes characterized as a consumptive activity however it seeks to only harvest what nature's garden can share while promoting stewardship, ecological awareness, and community engagement, connecting Minnesotans to our shared lands and reinforcing the importance of conservation and citizen responsibility.

We commend the legislation's commitment to a scientifically rigorous approach. Decisions about foraging should be guided by accurate, data-driven assessments rather than restrictive measures based on assumptions or incomplete information.

By developing science-based guidelines, the task force can effectively balance conservation priorities with the fundamental rights of Minnesotans to responsibly access and enjoy state lands.

Furthermore, the inclusive approach outlined in the bill—incorporating Indigenous voices, local businesses, academics, and diverse cultural groups—ensures that the recommendations will honor Minnesota's rich heritage and varied practices. We strongly support the provision for educational outreach, as public education is critical to fostering a responsible foraging community.

The Minnesota Foraging Alliance looks forward to contributing our expertise and collaborating closely with the DNR, fellow stakeholders and land users on this important initiative.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We urge your full support for establishing the Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force.

Warm regards,

David Lenz
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