

March 25, 2025
Sen. Tou Xiong
3203 Minnesota Senate Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55155



RE: Senate File 1464
Dear Chair Xiong,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate File 1464 which proposes legislation establishing a task force on sustainable foraging. As a chef, educator, and advocate for Indigenous food systems, I have spent my career working to revitalize and promote traditional ecological knowledge, including the respectful and sustainable harvesting and education of wild foods.

Gathering wild plants and mushrooms for food, medicine and crafting has sustained Indigenous communities for countless generations. It is a practice deeply rooted in reciprocity, seasonality, and stewardship of the land. As more people rediscover the value of wild foods—for health, culture, and connection to place—it is critical that we ensure these practices are carried out in a way that protects state ecosystems, respects Indigenous rights and ensures Minnesotans have access to state lands for sustainable foraging.

Creating an experienced task force dedicated to sustainable foraging is a forward-thinking step. It provides an opportunity to bring together tribal voices, ecologists, DNR land managers, foraging experts and community members to share expertise and develop guidelines that support both biodiversity and cultural resilience.

I commend Sen. Pha and her coauthors of this legislation for recognizing the importance of thoughtful, inclusive stewardship of our natural resources. I urge lawmakers to support the formation of this task force, and I welcome the opportunity to contribute to its efforts.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to sustainability and equity.

Sincerely,
Sean Sherman

Executive Director, NATIFS.org - Founder: NATIFS, The Sioux Chef, Owamni
3X James Beard Award–Winning Chef and Author, TIME Magazine 100 Most Influential in the World