



## **Written Testimony Requesting Amendment to SF 5073**

To: Chair Sen. Aric Putnam & Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development

Dear Honorable Members,

On behalf of the Rise & Repair Alliance, we formally request that SF 5073, the Agriculture Policy & Budget Omnibus, be amended to include language from SF 3915 (Kunesh), a bill to restrict the application of pesticides in & near Wild Rice waters.

In front of a packed room of constituents, SF 3915 was heard as part of this committee's agenda on April 8th, 2026, and it was laid over for possible inclusion in this omnibus. Minnesotans and Tribal Leadership traveled from across Minnesota's geographic boundaries for this hearing to demonstrate the broad public support behind this policy and to testify about the urgent need to protect Wild Rice for future generations by modifying our statutes to include Wild Rice waters in our state's pesticide application laws.

No in-person testimony was offered opposing the language of the bill during the April 8th committee hearing. Supportive in-person testimony was heard from the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and representatives from White Earth & Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and written testimony included over 50 organizations and individual letters from concerned residents.

The House Companion Bill, HF 3898 (Falconer), was heard in the House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee on March 25th, 2026 before the 1st & 2nd committee deadline and was laid over.

We urge this committee to adopt SF 3915 into this omnibus bill so that we can enter conference committees with this language included and demonstrate our willingness, as a state, to protect Wild Rice.

Included with this request is a summary of the bill, its intent, photos of on-going work to protect wild rice, additional information & sources, as well as key extracts from in-person testimony offered during the April 8th hearing.

Respectfully,

Leanna Goose – Organizer, Rise & Repair Alliance  
Eóin Small – Organizer, Rise & Repair Alliance  
Gina Peltier – Organizer, Rise & Repair Alliance

## BILL SUMMARY AND FACTS ON THE NEED TO PROTECT WILD RICE WATERS FROM PESTICIDES

This bill addresses the issue of pesticides entering wild rice waters by requiring the state to take steps to prevent contamination. While the Minnesota Department of Agriculture has acknowledged that wild rice waters are already monitored, this legislation requires action and strengthens it through collaboration and consultation with tribes. It also requires a report on the issue to be submitted to the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and establishes ongoing consultation with tribes, creating a pathway to address the problem together and better protect wild rice from pesticide exposure. ***We would never spray an organic farmer's field with pesticides without their permission; the same principle applies here. Wild rice grows and thrives without the use of pesticides or fertilizers. This is an agricultural issue: people across the state eat this food and enjoy it, and do not want poisons added to it!***

Pesticides are a huge problem for our waterways in Minnesota. Prior state research and findings identified neonics as pervasive and damaging contaminants, with (Berens et al. (2021) finding at least one neonic in 97% of all Minnesota creek and river water samples, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) identifying neonics as “surface water pesticides of concern” and stating that “seed treatments [are] the likely source of contamination in Minnesota streams and rivers near agricultural watersheds” (Petersen 2024) ([NRDC](#)) This specific pesticide has been shown to be dangerous to human health. **“Children are the most at risk from neonics. Studies link prenatal exposure to neonics with higher rates of birth defects of the heart and brain, autism spectrum disorder, and cognitive impairment.”** ([NRDC Fact sheet](#)) Lucas Rhoads from the NRDC Action Fund stated in the hearing, **“Neonics are designed to be absorbed by plants, meaning contamination of wild rice waters is almost certainly leading to absorption by wild rice plants, which are then eaten by people.”**

The state also permits pesticide applications directly into wild rice waters. According to the MNDNR, glyphosate is known to control wild rice plants, so applying this chemical to wild rice waters is proven to harm wild rice beds across the state. ([MNDNR Aquatic pesticides](#)) According to Army Corps research, nearly all of the pesticides approved by the state for aquatic use are harmful to wild rice growth at certain life stages. “Aquatic formulations of the herbicides diquat, endothall, fluridone, and 2,4-D were applied at varying rates and contact times to three growth stages of wild rice. Results showed that the degree of herbicide injury varied with plant growth stage. Wild rice treated at younger growth stages (early tillering or seedling stages) was more sensitive to chemical treatment than plants treated at later stages of development.” ([Response of Wild Rice to Selected Aquatic Herbicides](#)) Copper sulfate was not mentioned in this study, but this pesticide is dangerous to apply to waters in the state. Copper is a heavy metal, so applying it directly to water can be harmful to human health, as ingesting larger amounts can lead to kidney and liver damage. ([CDC](#)) **Copper has also been shown to be absorbed by wild rice. ([Health Risk from Toxic Metals in Wild Rice Grown in Copper Mining-Impacted Sediments](#)) Sulfate is known to harm wild rice growth.**

Many tribes already have pesticide protections in place on their reservations to safeguard wild rice, but as Dustin Roy, the Natural Resources Director for White Earth, stated, “wild rice does not stop at reservation boundaries.” Much of it grows in Anishinaabe treaty territory, where our people continue to hold inherent and federally recognized rights to hunt, fish, and gather. Today, wild rice faces growing threats from climate change, invasive species, agricultural runoff, proposed sulfide mining, and pollen drift from cultivated varieties. These threats, when combined, threaten this plant’s very existence. [One study](#) notes that in the Great Lake Region, “wild rice available for off-reservation harvest is decreasing by 5-7%

annually—declines that are likely to continue due to anthropogenic climate change.” All of these threats are human-caused, so if we are at the root of these problems, we also have the power to be the solutions! The state government has called for action to help wild rice. The [Governor’s 2019 task force](#) recognized the decline of wild rice and called for a wild rice stewardship council and action. The [2023 Legislative Report on Wild Rice](#) echoes and reinforces the need for action and collaboration to help this plant. SF3915 aims to begin to create collaboration and action to protect wild rice. For these reasons we ask that you please include SF3915 in the Agricultural Omnibus bill SF5073 to start addressing the issue of pesticides in our waterways through collaboration and action at the state level.

Sources to learn more:

<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/neonic-pesticides-in-minnesota-water.pdf>

[https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/2026-03/Neonic\\_Human\\_Health\\_FS\\_26-03-A\\_04\\_locked.pdf](https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/2026-03/Neonic_Human_Health_FS_26-03-A_04_locked.pdf)

[https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/fish\\_wildlife/fisheries/apm/pests.pdf?v=2024.04.25-16.28.31](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/fish_wildlife/fisheries/apm/pests.pdf?v=2024.04.25-16.28.31)

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA417366.pdf>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-025-02233-0>

<https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/sites/eqb/files/Governor%27s%20Task%20Force%20on%20Wild%20Rice%20Report%20January%203%202019.pdf>

<https://www.lrl.mn.gov/docs/2024/mandated/240126.pdf>

[Protecting Manoomin for the Next Seven Generations - Leech Lake Tribal College](#)

<https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsDetails.aspx?faqid=205&toxid=37>





No photo credit needed: Photos show the extent of the problem of invasive plants along the Leech Lake shore and our youth and community working to help without chemical pesticides by reseeding manoomin. This approach helps strengthen food systems and supports healthier waterways.