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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 1578

02/25/2021 Authored by Lislegard, Ecklund, Sandstede and Lueck
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to environment; establishing Wild Rice Stewardship Council; appropriating
1.3 money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 84.

1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.5 Section 1. [84.1511] WILD RICE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL.

1.6 Subdivision 1. Council created. (a) The Wild Rice Stewardship Council is established
1.7 to foster leadership, collaboration, coordination, and communication among state and tribal
1.8 government bodies and wild rice stakeholders. Members of the council must represent a
1.9 wide range of interests and perspectives and be able to make interdisciplinary
1.10 recommendations on managing, monitoring, providing outreach for, researching, and
1.11 regulating wild rice.

1.12 (b) The governor must appoint council members who represent a wide range of interests
1.13 and perspectives and include representatives of state government; tribal government; wild
1.14 rice resource users; national pollutant discharge elimination system permittees;
1.15 nongovernmental organizations; research scientists and wild rice managers with expertise
1.16 in wild rice biology, ecology, and management; and impacted local governments and
1.17 communities.

1.18 (c) The council must review and consider the recommendations of the governor's task
1.19 force on wild rice regarding the council's work, including the recommendation to use a
1.20 committee structure that includes council members and nonmembers with relevant subject
1.21 matter expertise for technical work related to management plans, monitoring, and research.

2.1 Subd. 2. Council responsibilities. (a) The council must provide the governor, chief
2.2 executives of Minnesota's 11 Indian tribes, and the legislature a biennial report on the health
2.3 of wild rice and policy and funding recommendations to ensure that wild rice thrives in
2.4 Minnesota.

2.5 (b) The council must recommend to the commissioners of natural resources and the
2.6 Pollution Control Agency a shared monitoring protocol that includes biological, chemical,
2.7 and hydrological factors affecting wild rice to assess the health of wild rice populations
2.8 over time. The protocol must draw on existing resources such as the monitoring protocol
2.9 for wild rice developed by Minnesota Sea Grant, the lake survey and vegetation mapping
2.10 methodologies of the Department of Natural Resources, and the monitoring methodologies
2.11 of the 1854 Treaty Authority. The council must include recommendations on implementing
2.12 the protocol and must regularly prepare a report on protocol implementation.

2.13 (c) The council must recommend to the commissioner of natural resources a
2.14 comprehensive, statewide management plan for wild rice. The plan must include clear goals
2.15 and indicators, activities, time frames, organizational responsibilities, and performance
2.16 measures. Indicators of wild rice health must have the ability to be tracked over time to
2.17 facilitate a better understanding of the impact of various stressors versus the natural variability
2.18 of wild rice. The council must work with tribes to develop an understanding of natural wild
2.19 rice variability through traditional ecological knowledge and lake histories. Biological,
2.20 chemical, and hydrological factors must be considered.

2.21 (d) The council must identify and recommend research priorities and required funding
2.22 levels. Prioritization should be given to needs identified through the monitoring protocol
2.23 and management plans recommended by the council. Topics of research may include:

2.24 (1) assessment of diverse factors impacting wild rice health and interaction among these
2.25 factors;

2.26 (2) criteria and methodology for restoring wild rice within its historic range;

2.27 (3) seed development;

2.28 (4) impact of climate change;

2.29 (5) effective methods of controlling waterfowl predation; and

2.30 (6) roles of root plaques, hydrology, landscape context, and other related factors.

2.31 (e) The council must provide a forum for scientists and managers to convene and explore
2.32 research needs, approaches, and outcomes for building a shared understanding of the threats
2.33 to and opportunities for fostering wild rice health and to fill data gaps.

3.1 Subd. 3. Outreach and education. (a) The council must advise state agencies and the
 3.2 legislature on statewide outreach and education on wild rice. Activities may include:

3.3 (1) developing a statewide education and promotion campaign to raise awareness about
 3.4 the ecological, nutritional, and cultural value of wild rice;

3.5 (2) coordinating an annual Wild Rice Week in which tribal chief executives and the
 3.6 governor declare the first week of September Wild Rice Week; and

3.7 (3) recommending actions to raise awareness and increase enforcement of natural wild
 3.8 rice labeling laws, including those that require specified labeling for natural wild rice.

3.9 (b) The council must develop and recommend to the commissioner of the Pollution
 3.10 Control Agency a road map for protecting wild rice from harmful levels of pollutants and
 3.11 other stressors through a holistic approach that addresses the water quality standard for
 3.12 sulfate in conjunction with enhanced monitoring, management, and education efforts and
 3.13 that leads to protecting wild rice and strategically using state and community resources.

3.14 (c) The council must develop and recommend to the commissioner of the Pollution
 3.15 Control Agency a structured approach to listing wild-rice waters and potential implementation
 3.16 of a water quality standard for sulfate to maximize protection of wild rice while limiting
 3.17 the scope and extent of burdens to Minnesota communities caused by the difficulty of
 3.18 treating sulfate.

3.19 **Sec. 2. WILD RICE; APPROPRIATIONS.**

3.20 \$..... in fiscal year 2022 and \$..... in fiscal year 2023 are appropriated from the general
 3.21 fund to the commissioner of natural resources for protecting, restoring, and enhancing wild
 3.22 rice. Of this amount, up to \$..... each year may be used to support the work of the Wild
 3.23 Rice Stewardship Council.