



Senate Fiscal Agency
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bill 802 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Adam Hollier
Committee: Agriculture

Date Completed: 7-14-22

RATIONALE

Through the years the State has adopted objects, animals, and plants as official State symbols. In addition to the State flag, State seal, and State coat-of-arms, currently the State has a variety of official State symbols: the State stone (Petoskey); State flower (Apple Blossom); State fish (Brook Trout); State reptile (Painted Turtle); State gem (Isle Royale Greenstone); State soil (Kalkaska); State bird (Robin); and State tree (White Pine). It has been pointed out that, thus far, the State has not adopted a State native grain. It has been suggested that the Michigan wild rice, or manoomin, which evidently is of dietary and cultural importance to many of the indigenous people in Michigan, be named the State native grain.

CONTENT

The bill would enact a new law to designate manoomin (*Zizania palustris* and *Zizania aquatica*), also known as Michigan wild rice, as the official native grain of Michigan. The bill states that "Manoomin is a sacred and important component to many wetlands and has a cultural significance to the indigenous people of this state".

BACKGROUND

Wild rice is a persistent annual grass that grows in the Great Lakes region and reproduces each year from seed stock deposited in previous fall seasons. The plant typically grows in shallow to moderate water depths. Called "manoomin" by the Anishinaabeg people (a group of tribes including the Ojibwe), the plant is a cultural staple for those communities.

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

State symbols should highlight wildlife and natural resources in the State and should represent something special or unique about Michigan. According to Anishinaabeg oral tradition, thousands of years ago the Anishinaabeg people were directed by prophecy to move from the Atlantic coast find a place where food grows on water. Their journey led them to the Great Lakes region, including Michigan. They settled in these areas because of wild rice, which grows in by bodies of water, thus fulfilling the prophecy. Since then, manoomin has remained a culturally significant crop to the tribes of Michigan, but these native grains have seen destruction as a result of development and other environmental harms. Its commemoration as a native grain could bring attention to this crop as an environmentally sustainable food source, a cultural symbol of Michigan's indigenous symbol, and a symbol of Michigan's history.

Legislative Analyst: Jeff Mann

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Cory Savino, PhD

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.