



Written by [Ty Bodden](#) on March 12, 2026

Inherent Right to Life for ... Wild Rice?

Minnesota Democrats are [advancing legislation](#) that would recognize an “inherent right” for uncultivated wild rice to “exist and thrive,” even as state law continues to uphold expansive abortion “rights.” [Senate File 3749 \(SF3749\)](#), introduced by [Senator Mary Kunesh](#) (D-New Brighton) on February 19, 2026, would amend Minnesota’s statute describing the state’s official grain and add language recognizing such a right.

The proposal comes three years after Governor Tim Walz [signed](#) the [Protect Reproductive Options \(PRO\) Act](#) into law on January 31, 2023. The law codifies abortion as a “fundamental right” in Minnesota statute, and allows the procedure at any stage when deemed necessary for the mother’s health.

Wild rice has been Minnesota’s official [state grain](#) since 1977. SF3749 expands the statute declaring such to include scientific names and indigenous terms, and adds: “It is the policy of this state to recognize the inherent right of uncultivated wild rice to exist and thrive in Minnesota.”

During a March 10 [hearing](#) before the Senate State and Local Government Committee, supporters emphasized wild rice’s cultural and environmental importance. An [oral amendment](#) to remove the “inherent rights” language failed on a 7-5 vote.



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Minnesota Democrats are debating whether Wild Rice has an inherent right to life.

Two years ago they voted for abortion to be legal up to the moment of birth.



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Wild rice is undeniably valuable to Minnesota’s heritage and ecosystem. Yet the language of rights carries serious meaning. Rights belong to human beings — created in the image of God and endowed by their Creator with [unalienable rights](#). When lawmakers extend such terminology to plants while refusing protection to preborn children, they are unserious, make illegitimate arguments, and reveal a deeper conflict over the source and meaning of rights.

In a [constitutional republic](#), government exists to secure God-given rights — beginning with the right to life, as recognized in the Declaration of Independence and protected by the [Ninth Amendment](#) to the [U.S. Constitution](#) — not invent new ones.



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