



**Pokégnek Bodéwadmik**  
POKAGON BAND OF POTAWATOMI  
TRIBAL COUNCIL

September 11, 2023

Anishinaabek Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party  
Attn: Julie Dye, Secretary

VIA EMAIL ONLY TO:  
anishinaabekcaucus@gmail.com

RE: Support for HB 4852, HB 4854, 4853, 4855, 4856, 4857, and 4858,  
the "Michigan Indigenous Culture and Heritage Pack"


Dear Secretary Dye:

On behalf of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians ("Pokagon Band"), a federally recognized Indian tribe, I write to express support for each of the above-referenced Michigan House Bills comprising the Michigan Indigenous Culture and Heritage Pack ("Indigenous Bills Pack"). The Pokagon Band has trust land in Michigan and exercises its sovereignty to the fullest extent over such trust land. The Pokagon Band has approximately 6,100 Pokagon Band citizens, most of whom reside within the State of Michigan.

As a tribal government, the Pokagon Band seeks to preserve, promote, and strengthen its tribal sovereignty and to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all of its citizens. Consistent with this purpose, the Pokagon Band has a solemn obligation to protect and restore its tribal culture and traditions for the wellbeing of the Pokagon Band, its citizens, and future generations. Important aspects of the Pokagon Band's tribal culture and traditions are inherently interwoven with the land and its natural resources, including for traditional ceremonies, hunting of wild game, and gathering and cultivation of traditional foods, medicines, and ceremonial items.

The Pokagon Band, like many tribal governments, has invested significant resources towards the restoration of its tribal culture and traditions, including through its Department of Language and Center of History and Culture. The Indigenous Bills Pack provides protections that are consistent with the Pokagon Band's efforts to protect and restore its tribal culture and traditions, including:

- **HB 4852** – designates Manoomin, also known as Michigan wild rice, as the official native grain of the State of Michigan and acknowledges that manoomin is a sacred and important component to many wetlands and that it has a cultural significance to indigenous people of the State of Michigan.

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- **HB 4854** – Amends the Revised School Code to prevent the prohibition or punishment of Indigenous individuals wearing traditional regalia and bringing traditional objects into a school building.
  - **HB 4853** – Amends the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to prevent the discrimination by an educational institution against an individual in the full utilization of or benefit from the institution because the individual is wearing traditional regalia or because the individual possesses traditional objects.
  - **HB 4855** – Amends the National Resources and Environmental Protection Act, including to add additional requirements regarding the members of the Wolf Management Advisory Council. The additional requirements include a requirement that the member that represents a tribal government, must represent a tribal government from Michigan.
  - **HB 4856** – Amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, including to add an additional member to the Michigan Wildlife Council that is an individual representing a tribal government in the State of Michigan.
  - **HB 4857** – Amends the Noxious Weeds Act, including to remove milkweed from the list of noxious weeds. Milkweed is important because it attracts native bees and other pollinators.
  - **HB 4858** – Amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, including to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticide on public land.

The Pokagon Band supports the enactment of the Indigenous Bills Pack and appreciates the opportunity to provide its comments.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Richards  
Tribal Council Chairwoman