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STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETY-FOURTH SESSION

S.R. No. 32

(SENATE AUTHORS: PAPPAS)

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Introduction
Referred to Rules and Administration

OFFICIAL STATUS

A Senate resolution

designating April as Ecocide Awareness and Prevention Month in the State of Minnesota.

WHEREAS, the United States sprayed 20,000,000 gallons of the chemical Agent Orange in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, Agent Orange defoliated the jungles and caused cancers, neurological diseases, and birth defects in at least 3,000,000 people; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Arthur Galston, a biologist at Yale University, labeled this destruction "ecocide," a word combining the Greek "oikos," meaning "home," and the Latin "cidere," meaning "to kill," creating the new word ecocide, meaning "to kill our home"; and

WHEREAS, ecocide is defined as "unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts"; and

WHEREAS, examples of ecocide today include the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 off the coast of Louisiana; deforestation of the Amazon rainforest; the Alberta Tar Sands project, known as the most damaging project on the planet; destruction of worldwide coral reefs; fracking; exploitation of the Niger Delta; and the bombing of the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine; and

WHEREAS, there is increasing legal recognition at the global level of ecocide as a human rights crime of the same magnitude and gravity as the crime of genocide; and

WHEREAS, the European Parliament, the International Court of Justice, and the International Criminal Court have all criminalized ecocide with laws to hold major perpetrators financially responsible for the human and natural damages; and

WHEREAS, 700,000,000 people worldwide and 13,000,000 people in the United States will be displaced by environmental disasters by the year 2050; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, 11,500 people were killed by climate disasters and 148,000,000 people were affected by climate crises, numbers which are expected to rise annually; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations affirms that the climate crisis is not "gender-neutral." It disproportionately affects women, girls, and gender-expansive people, especially Indigenous and rural people, with displacement and death; and

WHEREAS, it is scientifically documented that the climate crisis is caused by the warming and rising of the seas, which constitute 71 percent of the surface of the planet, and that this warming and rising leads to increasingly fierce storms, droughts, and floods; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Defense has created Climate Adaptation Plans and stated that climate change is a threat multiplier with grave implications for United States defense and global security because of increasing competition to access food, water, shelter, and other life-sustaining resources; and

WHEREAS, at state legislatures in the United States, there is increasing legal recognition of ecocide as a crime, including passage of laws in Vermont and New York and pending legislation in several other states; and

WHEREAS, from 1980 to 2024, there were 61 confirmed environmental disasters in Minnesota that cost the state at least \$1,000,000,000 each and occurred at an average of 1.3 events a year; and

WHEREAS, from 2019 to 2023, the most recent data on record, the rate of disasters in Minnesota that cost at least \$1,000,000,000 each increased to four events a year; and

WHEREAS, the cost of mitigation, reconstruction, repair, and prevention of climate crises is currently borne by taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the responsibility to mitigate, reconstruct, repair, and prevent environmental damage in Minnesota must be borne by and paid by the entities most culpable; and

WHEREAS, laws to end impunity for perpetrators of ecocide will deter future malfeasance and encourage positive actions; and

WHEREAS, ending impunity for ecocide in Minnesota will reduce harms that disproportionately affect Indigenous, rural, and minority populations; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the State of Minnesota that it proclaims the month of April Ecocide Awareness and Prevention Month, and encourages programs and public engagement to prevent environmental degradation, which is a threat multiplier of violence and harm.