

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 63

Senator Victory offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to recognize June 23, 2023, as "Rosen Rye Day".

2 Whereas, Michigan's food and agriculture system is a major
3 contributor to income and employment in the state's economy,
4 accounting for over \$100 billion in direct, indirect, and induced
5 economic activity and over 800,000 jobs; and

6 Whereas, Since its admission to the union in 1837, Michigan
7 has been an important producer of cereal grains including wheat,
8 corn, and rye. In 1909, a new rye varietal was brought to Michigan
9 Agricultural College (MAC) from Russia by Joseph Rosen and
10 subsequently cleaned, selected, and propagated by Professor Frank
11 Spragg; and

12 Whereas, It was determined conclusively that Rosen Rye vastly

1 outperformed common varietals and that its cultivation become a
2 priority for Michigan's agricultural community; and

3 Whereas, Beginning in 1917, significant exports of "Certified"
4 Rosen Rye seeded around the world, notably to major whiskey-
5 producing regions of the United States. By 1920, Michigan was the
6 nation's largest producer of rye; and

7 Whereas, It became apparent that, despite universal acclaim,
8 Rosen Rye crops diminished in quality from year to year due to
9 cross-pollination from contact with common rye. A decisive action
10 needed to be taken to isolate the finest seed-stock and protect the
11 innovations and investment of Michigan's agricultural community. In
12 turn, a survey was formed to determine suitable, isolated areas and
13 South Manitou Island was found to be ideal; and

14 Whereas, George and Louis Hutzler, along with Irvin Beck, led
15 all seven farms on South Manitou Island and formed a mutual pact,
16 swearing under penalty of drowning, to grow only Rosen Rye to
17 protect its genetic purity. Over the following decade, they earned
18 numerous international awards for "Certified" Rosen Rye, garnering
19 the farmers the moniker "Rye Kings" and Manitou Island as the
20 "World's Rye Center"; and

21 Whereas, Between the dawn of Prohibition, and the 1960s when
22 the last farmers left South Manitou Island, Michigan Rosen Rye was
23 venerated in whiskey advertisements, extolled in internal
24 distillery production manuals, and raised to legendary status in
25 bootlegging folklore, before completely disappearing from the
26 market for 50 years; and

27 Whereas, Under permit from the National Park Service, using
28 seeds from the United States Department of Agriculture Seed Bank,
29 along with assistance from Michigan State University's Department

1 of Bio Ag Research and volunteer descendants of the Hutzler and
2 Beck families, Mammoth Distilling has revived these historic farms
3 to reintroduce "Certified" Rosen Rye; now, therefore, be it

4 Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative
5 body recognize June 23, 2023, as "Rosen Rye Day"; and be it further

6 Resolved, That we recognize the critical role of native grains
7 and locally grown agriculture to the success of the craft spirits
8 industry in Michigan.