

March 8, 2022

To: The Minnesota Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development Finance & Policy

Re: Supporting value chain businesses advancing Continuous Living Cover agriculture (SF3721)

Dear Chair Westrom and committee members,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our strong support for SF3721, which would advance the development of Minnesota businesses focused on Continuous Living Cover (CLC) agriculture. We imagine a future close at hand when these companies rise as 21st-century leaders in Minnesota's agriculture and food sector, expanding options for Minnesota growers while supporting profitability, sustainability, and resilience.

Market-based CLC agriculture combines the excellent conservation outcomes of natural landscapes—such as prairie and woodland ecosystems—with the profitability of high-demand crops and diverse revenue streams.

State-supported basic research as well as grassroots innovation have brought new CLC crops and cropping systems to the cusp of commercial launch and scaling. These crops and cropping systems include Kernza Perennial Grain, hybrid hazelnuts, winter camelina, and elderberries, among others. Private companies and government agencies are increasingly turning to the agriculture sector for innovative ways to meet their environmental commitments, and CLC crops are perfectly suited to meet this new demand.

Minnesota is home to a growing cadre of new CLC-oriented businesses taking CLC innovations to market. A number of these businesses are led by or involve new and beginning farmers, BIPOC individuals and communities, and young entrepreneurs dedicating their lives to a profitable, sustainable, resilient agriculture sector in Minnesota. Similar to long-running State investments in renewable energy, dedicated State investment is needed and warranted to accelerate the supply chains and markets that will support expanded production of CLC crops and begin realizing these systems' public benefits at scale.

SF3721 would accelerate the development of CLC value chains by strategically investing in companies poised for commercial breakthrough, delivering significant public benefits to Minnesotans and further solidifying Minnesota as a national and international leader in 21st century agricultural innovation.

Public investment now will spur further innovation and private investment, creating new economic and community development opportunities for our state while also protecting soil, water, biodiversity, and climate.

We urge you to support this important measure during the 2022 legislative session.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Utilization Research Institute
Albert Lea Seed
Artisan Grain Collaborative
Audubon Minnesota
Bang Brewing
Beth Dooley's Kitchen
Birchwood Cafe
Clean River Partners
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)
Doughp Creations
Estling Farms Inc.
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas
Friends of the Mississippi River
Great River Greening
Green Lands Blue Waters
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance
Land Stewardship Project
League of Women Voters Minnesota
Lutheran Advocacy - Minnesota
Mad Agriculture
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Midwest Elderberry Cooperative
Minnesota Citizens' Climate Lobby
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Minnesota Farmers Union
MNL, Inc. (Minnesota Native Landscapes)
North Dakota State University
Northern Agronomy & Precision Services
Perennial Pantry, SBC
Perennial Promise Growers Cooperative

Regenerative Agriculture Alliance
Renewing the Countryside
Rural Advantage
Savanna Institute
Sustainable Farming Association
The Land Institute
The Plant Pathways Company, Inc.
Tree-Range Farms
University of Minnesota
West Central Initiative