

Keith Driscoll Family Partnership
PO Box 603
East Grand Forks, MN 56721

March 3, 2022

Dear Chair Westrom and members of the Agriculture and Rural Development Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the Keith Driscoll Family Partnership, I am writing today in support of the Forever Green Agriculture Initiative and related enterprise development funding as outlined in SF3271 and SF3711. Our family has farmed near East Grand Forks since my great-great grandfather, James Driscoll homesteaded there in 1879, just one year after Minnesota became a state. I grew up in the same farmhouse where my father grew up, just two miles from where James homesteaded. Our family has very deep roots in the Red River Valley and a long history of civic leadership and innovation. My great-grandfather was one of the longest serving county commissioners in Polk County.

My father Keith Driscoll farmed with his brother Ray all his life. Their reputation for innovation in crops and farm practices brought people to visit and learn from them from all over the country. In the 1960's, they were the first to create a warehouse storage system that more efficiently stored potatoes grown for chipping. In the 1990's when the brothers began preparing for retirement, Keith created a family partnership to own his share of the farmland and over time, gifted the ownership to each of his nine children. I now serve as President of the partnership and do my best to continue his legacy of good land management and innovation.

In 1977, as a single mother with a finance degree I left East Grand Forks and moved to Minneapolis to find a job that could support my daughter and me. My career focused on community development work, through my own business and later as an appointed public official. Under my previous name, Rebecca Yanisch, I led the Minneapolis Community Development Agency in the 1990's and also served as Commissioner of Trade and Economic Development (now DEED) from 2001 to 2002. My life work was to make sure all Minnesotans had the opportunity to support their families in decent housing and healthy communities.

I retired from my professional career at the same time my father decided he no longer wanted to manage our family partnership in 2013. My parents were very clear that caring for the land and for each other over many future generations was their top priority and a legacy they wanted to continue. Unfortunately, three of my siblings are gone but their four children are shareholders in Keith Driscoll Family Partnership and actively working to continue their grandparent's vision.

For the past year, our shareholders have been exploring innovative crops and farm practices that better protect our farmland as well as the environment. We were delighted to connect with Don Wyse late last year and learn more about the Forever Green Agriculture Initiative. We are very interested in providing some of our rich Red River Valley farmland as a site for growing winter annuals and perennial crops that have been developed by the Forever Green.

The State of Minnesota's support is crucial to this new farming partnership. We recognize that the expertise provided by the University of Minnesota and FGI to develop future markets and revenue for these new crops are key to long term profitability for farmers in our region. We are located near a Research and Outreach Center in Crookston and look forward to providing the winter camelina that can be stored and processed there. That would also translate into good paying jobs in our region.

My niece, Heather Driscoll is available on Wednesday, March 9 to provide testimony and further information to your committee.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. The Driscoll family continues to be very committed to our state and region and strongly supports this key legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Driscoll". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Driscoll
President, Keith Driscoll Family Partnership