

March 22, 2022

Chair Torrey Westrom
Vice Chair Gary Dahms
Senator Erin Murphy
Members, Minnesota House Ag Finance and Policy Committee

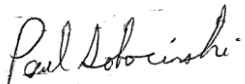
I am writing to strongly support **SF 4184**, which directs the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to prepare a report on the state of local and regional food systems and offer recommendations for further strengthening this sector.

I am livestock farmer who raise both beef and hogs in Southwestern Minnesota. My beef and some of my pork is marketed in direct sales which is done through local and regional food connections. I also raise pork for Niman Ranch which is a specialize market with has an emphasis on antibiotic free and natural. Local and regional food systems are important to a growing number of farmers who are seeking to get a fairer share of the food dollar that is made possible by specialization. SF4184 is a good step forward to measure important parts of agricultural production that is currently not measured by MDA.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is important to farmers and the public. Providing the financial resource to the Department to do this report on state of local regional food systems and to get its recommendations has value to all Minnesotans given the significant multiplier affect agriculture brings to Minnesota's economy.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Sobocinski".

Paul Sobocinski
Livestock Farmer
Member of Minnesota Farmers Union
Wabasso, Minnesota.