

April 18, 2022

Minnesota Senate
Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance
1150 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Ingebrigtsen, Vice Chair Ruud and Committee Members;

General Mills supports Senator Westrom's A-2 amendment for SF4043, and specifically two projects within it: Conservation Cooperative on Working Lands (Pheasants Forever) and the University of Minnesota Forever Green initiative.

General Mills, Inc. is a leading Minnesota-based global food company with brands that include Cheerios, Yoplait, Betty Crocker, Nature Valley, and Pillsbury. We are committed to advancing regenerative agriculture on 1 million acres of farmland by 2030, and to reducing the greenhouse gas footprint of our entire value chain 30% by 2030. Minnesota is a key state supplying agricultural ingredients for General Mills products. We have found that education and technical assistance are critical tools that support farmers and ranchers as they voluntarily incorporate new conservation practices.

Conservation Cooperative on Working Lands

Submitted by Pheasants Forever, the Conservation Cooperative on Working Lands project makes maximum use of private, local, and federal funds to bring substantial impact to every state dollar invested in the project. There is high demand from private landowners for assistance with implementing conservation practices and enrolling in conservation programs.

This project is currently proposed for funding at \$750,000, for which we express our thanks to LCCMR members and Senator Westrom. If that amount can be returned to the recent \$1.5 million level or the full \$4.5 million amount requested, Minnesota would be able to pull in greater amounts of federal funding. If fully funded the Conservation Cooperative on Working Lands project would impact over 250,000 acres at a cost to the state of Minnesota of less than \$20/acre. We believe this project is critical to supporting the sustainability, profitability, and resilience of Minnesota farmers, which is important for General Mills and the other food companies who depend on agriculture in the state. It is for these reasons that General Mills is investing in this project both with a financial contribution of \$300,000 and in-kind support totaling \$200,000.

University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative

The University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative is a highly respected research effort designed to develop new, economically viable perennial and winter annual crops. Success of this program improves long-term farm health and resilience while providing stable, new economic returns for farmers and helps to keep Minnesota positioned as a global leader in sustainable, profitable, and diversified cropping systems.



General Mills has partnered with Forever Green to improve the market viability of Kernza™ Intermediate Wheat Grass, a deeply rooted perennial wheatgrass, and one we are already incorporating into publicly available products such as the Cascadian Farm Climate Smart cereal. Our Senior Soil Scientist Steven Rosenzweig testified to our ongoing support for the value of its research before the Senate Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee on March 9, 2022.

We strongly urge your full support in funding these two projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Anderson'.

Lee Anderson
