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March 29, 2022

Senator Eric Pratt  
95 University Ave W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pratt and Committee Members:

UFCW Local 1189 represents workers in the meat and food processing industry throughout Minnesota. UFCW has been serving on the Committee for the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of Agriculture and Food Processing Workers (AWWC) since the committee's formation in 2021, established under Executive Order 21-14. While the committee has been diligently working for the past eight months to gather information and make recommendations, there is still more meaningful work to be done. UFCW 1189 supports the recommendation that this committee be codified in state statute, ensuring that this collaborative work continues to address the many challenges for workers in the agriculture and food processing sectors.

UFCW 1189 also supports the committee's recommendation to create an office of ombudsperson for the safety, health, and wellbeing of agricultural and food processing workers. During the beginning of the pandemic, our union representatives had a hard time following daily new health guidelines that were being implemented across different industries. We had to ensure that members were aware of recent health guideline changes, and we needed to communicate that in multiple languages. For workers who do not have a union to help them navigate workplace safety rules, creating an office of ombudsperson will connect workers to someone who can help them navigate the intricacies of government agencies, and their rights as workers.

Over the past eight months the Committee has devoted many hours working together and learning from experts that affect agriculture and food processing workers; however, our work is not finished. UFCW 1189 is proud to support the AWWC recommendations for DEED and we urge you to support DEED's proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Gleb', is written over a horizontal line.

James Gleb