

Hannah Bernhardt

68393 Scotch Pine Rd.
Finlayson, MN 55735
(612) 483-5121
hannah@medicinecreekfarm.com



Feb. 28, 2023

Chair Aric Putnam
Vice Chair Robert Kupec
Senator Torrey Westrom
Members, Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee

Dear Chair Putnam and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing to express my strong support for Senator Seeberger's bill appropriating funds for the MN Department of Agriculture Down Payment Assistance Grants (SF 1575).

I own and operate Medicine Creek Farm in Pine County. I raise grass fed beef and lamb and pastured pork, and direct market all my products to over 500 customers primarily in the metro regions of the Twin Cities and Duluth. I am also a member of the Emerging Farmer Working Group, advising the MDA on ways to improve equity and access for other farmers like me.

The number one issue emerging farmers face in our state is access to land. Many Minnesotans' immigrant ancestors such as my own benefited from public programs to access land. Despite growing up on a farm and having connections to family-owned land, agricultural land prices prevented me from buying it, and I had to look elsewhere in the state for affordable farmland. As land prices continue to increase, Minnesota's new farmers continue to need assistance to get started, and the Down Payment Assistance Grant program is immensely helpful to getting more beginners on the land. The first round of the Agriculture Down Payment Assistance Grant demonstrated the dire need for the program as interest was high and the requests quickly met the money allocated to the program.

Please continue to support our emerging farmers and the future of Minnesota agriculture. I appreciate your consideration of this proposal and thank Senator Seeberger for her leadership as well as the Committee's work on behalf of Minnesota's food producers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah K. Bernhardt".

Hannah K. Bernhardt