

March 3, 2023

Dear Chair Putnam and members of the Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to support three bills being heard by the Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee this week. They include:

- S.F. 2158 (Gustafson) Farm-to-school and Early Care, Establishing Regional Local Foods Coordinators
- S.F. 2016 (Gustafson) Urban Agriculture Grant Funding
- S.F. 1727 (Gustafson) Funding The Good Acre's Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund Program

These bills support farmers, and investment in our local agriculture system. These issues are interconnected, and we know that to truly transform the food system, we need investment across many sectors, from production to processing to education and distribution. These bills cover a wide range of support, including funds for both urban and rural spaces. They support funding for schools, early care settings, local groceries and small food retailers, and emerging farmers. These bills fund programs that support food access and hunger relief efforts, while also ensuring farmers receive fair wages for their products. All of these bills represent positive steps forward for supporting local agriculture, local families, and our community.

The Farm to School and Early Care bill provides funding to local schools and early cares, giving kids access to and knowledge of healthy local foods. It also keeps funds in the local community, and gives farmers access to sustainable, predictable markets for their products.

The Urban Agriculture grant provides funds for both urban agricultural education and community development grants.

The Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund (LEAFF) program supports local farmers in guaranteeing markets for their produce, and providing fresh, local products to local food shelves and other hunger relief organizations.

These programs all support emerging and beginning farmers, small and medium size farms, and supporting access to fresh, healthy foods for children, low-income communities, and those battling hunger. We urge you to support these bills that represent public investment in our local food economy. Supporting these efforts will support transformative change in our farm and food system.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Better Health

Alden-Conger Public Schools

Alexandria School District

Appetite For Change

Bemidji Schools ISD #31

Buffalo Hanover Montrose schools #877

Cannon Falls Area Schools
Chatfield ISD
Christ's Household of Faith School
Climate Land Leaders
DeLaSalle High school
Foundation for Essential Needs
Fridley Public School
Heron Lake Okabena School
Hunger Solutions Minnesota
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Keystone Community Services
Lac qui Parle Valley School
Land Stewardship Project
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Mesabi East School District
Metro Food Justice Network
Mill City Farmers Market
Minnesota Farmers Union
Minnesota Farmers' Market Association
MN State Academies
MN350
Multicultural Kids Network
Neighborhood Roots (Kingfield, Fulton, and
Nokomis Farmers Markets)
North Metro Flex Academy
Northwestern Minnesota Juvenile Center
Osseo Area School District
Pillsbury United Communities
Renewing the Countryside
Ridgeway Community School

River's Edge Ranch
Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC
Ruted Solutions
Sacred Heart School
St. Andrew Catholic School
St. John the Baptist Catholic School - New
Brighton
Sustainable Farming Association
The Food Group
The Good Acre
Upsala Area Schools
Vote Climate
West Central Initiative