



March 3, 2023

Senate Committee Administrator, Hunter Pederson

RE: SF2158 Farm-to-school and Early Care, Establishing Regional Local Foods Coordinators

Dear Ms. Rudolph:

We at Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed enthusiastically support SF2158 *Farm-to-school and Early Care, Establishing Regional Local Foods Coordinators*. We value the economic, health, agricultural and environmental benefits this bill accomplishes.

Economic Benefits

This bill broadens the volume opportunity and enhances the economy by including more farmers to provide healthy, nutritious, local product to children in schools.

Farm to School is good for local economies. A study out of Oregon showed that for every dollar spent on Farm to School programs, \$2.16 is generated in additional economic activity for the local economy. The Farm to School bill would not only support Thousand Hills directly, it would also give small businesses and entrepreneurs in Greater Minnesota a boost in revitalizing their communities. Additional money dedicated to MN Farm to School will motivate new schools and early care providers to become customers.

Nutritional and Environmental Benefits

Sourcing local regeneratively raised beef for schools has an immediate financial benefit for local farms and encourages diversity of crops beyond mono-culture soy and corn, which do not directly benefit the health of our local children and often represent destructive agricultural practices that degrade top-soil, release carbon into the atmosphere and create watershed issues.

Farm to School programs are beneficial for our kids because it gives them access to and knowledge of healthy local foods. The link between the food kids eat and their educational and health outcomes is becoming increasingly clear. Access to fresh, healthy food, starting as young as possible, fuels brain development and shapes food preference over a lifetime.

About Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed

Founded in 2003, Clearwater, MN – based Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed holistically grazes regeneratively-raised and lifetime grazed 100% grassfed beef products under the Thousand Hills label. Our regenerative agriculture practices support biological diversity, natural resources, native wildlife habitat and soil fertility. Thousand Hills has 15 employees and currently sells product to approximately 12 Schools/Early Child Care Customers, representing \$100,000+ in revenue.

This bill represents both short- and long-term benefits to our state's farming community, child nutrition community and environment. We urge you to continue moving forward with this opportunity to provide nutritional local food through the proposed Farm-to-School bill SF2158. Thank you for your consideration.

We are available for additional questions and conversations.

Sincerely,

Matt Maier
Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed Owner
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