

Chair Putnam, Vice Chair Kupec and members of the Minnesota Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee,

I am writing to request your support for Senator Kunesh's bill SF 2900 which creates a program to provide vital support for farmers' markets, direct marketing, and markets within urban American Indian communities and Tribal nations.

Every public investment made to provide markets for the growers strengthens an emerging local food economy that is vital for our food security in the face of unpredictable weather and its profound impact on supply chains.

Today, nearly 400 farmers markets serve Minnesota's communities. The growers who participate in these neighborhood markets also provide produce for food shelves, Farm to School meals, and local businesses. Supporting marketing opportunities for the growers is vital to the success of all three. In recent years Tribal nations and urban American Indian food initiatives developed to pursue the revival of indigenous food cultures in support the health and well-being of communities. Public investment to support their markets contributes to their overall success.

Public demand for access to affordable, culturally relevant, fresh, and prepared food sources is growing. By investing our public funds to support markets, growers can better meet that demand by planning their production effectively by planting their fields to deliver produce throughout the growing season and for processing and storage as well to the benefit of everyone who relies on them.

Please support SF 2900 as an investment to strengthen our communities' capacity to support emerging farmers and meet demands for healthy food sources now and in the future.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,
Marita Bujold
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