

March 16, 2023

MN Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee
2116 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55155

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

Neighborhood Roots strongly supports Senate File 2900 Support for Farmers' Markets and Direct Marketing Producers.

My name is Erica Lanning, and I am the Market Manager for Neighborhood Roots, a non-profit organization based in Minneapolis. Neighborhood Roots operates 3 neighborhood farmers' markets: Fulton, Kingfield, and Nokomis Farmers Markets. We are passionately committed to serving our community of customers, farmers, and artisans, and this appropriation would enable us to better serve those stakeholders.

These additional funds open up so many possibilities for our organization. We could expand our vendor grant programs, which currently include a new vendor incubation scholarship and emergency fund. We could invest back into our vendors by expanding training opportunities, and back into our customer base by providing nutrition education and incentives and more programming. We also need to pay for infrastructure improvements, including equipment storage and electricity access. Last but not least, the funds could go towards essential expenses, such as staff time, rental charges, and permits to name a few.

Farmers' markets are still recovering from financial and logistical hardships caused by COVID-19, and need additional support to build back to pre-COVID levels. Markets commonly run on tight budgets, sometimes on no budget at all. \$10,000 is a meaningful amount for our organization, and for many local markets. Trust that it would be put to good use supporting vibrant communities and strengthening local food systems.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erica Lanning
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