



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

My name is Betsy Wentz and I am a manager of Riverwalk Market Fair in Northfield, MN. I strongly support Senate File 2900 Support for Farmers' Markets and Direct Marketing Producers. Our market is in a town of 20,790 people and we see about 1,500 visitors per week at our market. We represent more than 200 vendors each year. Our market only allows vendors to sell items that are home grown, farm raised, or handmade. We do not allow any reselling. This means every dollar raised by our vendors goes directly to their small business. Our vendors generated over \$282,000 dollars at the market last season which is a significant impact to their businesses and our local economy.

Our market would be absolutely thrilled to receive this \$10,000 grant and we believe we would use it in very impactful ways. Our market would allot a significant portion of the money towards our Power of Produce (PoP) Club program. The PoP Club is a program designed by the University of Minnesota Extension Services and markets can voluntarily join. Its goal is to re-enforce healthy eating for children ages 3 to 14. Each PoP Club Saturday at the market we offer an activity to kids that revolves around nutrition and healthy choices - it might be planting a veggie plant or a produce scavenger hunt around the market. After participating in the activity, kids are then given \$3 in PoP Club Bucks that they can use at the market to spend on fruits and vegetables. This is a great way to give kids ownership and build interest in eating well. Currently, we raise money from local businesses and our vendor fees in order to fund the PoP Club but with this backing we would be able to offer it more weeks during the season and potentially expand it to a PoP+ Club which allows seniors to also receive PoP Club Bucks!

Another way we would use this grant is to use it towards translation services. We have paid to translate our application into Spanish to have a more equitable and accessible market. We would love to also translate our website and our marketing materials to continue to improve our outreach to the Spanish speaking community in our area. We would hope to also translate our application and materials into Hmong, the first language of many of our farmer vendors. This would make it easier for our current and new Hmong speaking vendors to be a part of our market.

The 2023 season is the first year our market is offering SNAP/EBT services at the market. One way we would further use this grant is to send mailings to our community to let people know of this new program. We would be most likely to do this in conjunction with our local Community Action Center and Food Shelf - helping food insecure families gain access to healthy, locally grown produce is incredible helpful to both the families who have access fresh, local food and the farmers who are able to increase their income through these sales. We would love to make sure that every family that participates in SNAP in our community knows that Riverwalk Market Fair is a place they are welcome.

I urge you to support Senate File 2900 Support for Farmers' Markets and Direct Marketing Producers. If you can impact 200 businesses and thousands of families in our local community, imagine what this money could do multiplied by 382 - the number of farmers' markets that would receive this grant in Minnesota. We would have a strong impact on Minnesotan small farmers, on food access, and on our local economy. Farmers' Markets do an incredible job of keeping local dollars circulating in the local economy. This would have a positive impact at all levels of the economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Betsy Wentz

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