



Climate Land Leaders are working with compassion and commitment to address the climate crisis on their lands

February 26, 2024

Senator Aric Putnam, Chair
And Senate Agriculture, Broadband, Rural Development Committee
95 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF 3404

Dear Senator Putnam and Committee Members,

On behalf of Climate Land Leaders (CLL), I'd like to convey our support of SF 3404, technical amendment to the Farmers Market legislation passed last year

The Climate Land Leaders Initiative activates landowners and farmers as leaders who make bold changes on their lands that reduce emissions, store more carbon in soils and plants and help ensure that farms and rural communities are increasingly resilient. Climate Land Leaders exchange knowledge, on-the-ground experiences and encouragement as they tackle ambitious strategies that are proven to alleviate climate change. Our members serve as leaders on climate policy and equity initiatives.

Climate Land Leaders supports policies that support and enhance local food systems such as farmers markets, which are an essential marketing tool for fruit and vegetable growers and meat and poultry sellers.

SF 3404 would provide flexibility to farmers markets to use funds for staff coordination, in addition to the equipment, materials and infrastructure already supported. Often, farmers markets are coordinated by volunteers who have limited time available to do an effective job. Moreover, volunteer time from week to week or market to market is not reliable. Farmers Market vendor fees, especially for smaller markets or new markets, are often not sufficient to cover the ongoing coordination costs, at least initially. In my own community, the New Ulm Farmers Market is obtaining a SNAP card reader and Market Bucks for its next season. We've been able to obtain funding for equipment and advertising, but the essential time to apply for the reader, obtain it, make it operational, ensure correct use by farmer vendors and ongoing operation is not able to be paid for by those grants. So, it is made possible only

Mission: Landowners create community and support to alleviate climate change through land stewardship and conservation
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through volunteer help, which ultimately is going to be inadequate for the bi-weekly market. Having initial funding to successfully launch SNAP and Market Bucks is foundational to getting nutritious, fresh local foods onto the tables of all Minnesotans, including those of limited means. It also would help expand the number of vendors and have adequate vendor fees to pay for ongoing coordination at the bi-weekly market.

Passage of SF 3404 removes the limitation posed by last year's measure by allowing for the farmers market funding to be used for essential staffing. Please support this measure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Theresa M. Keaveny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Theresa" and last name "Keaveny" clearly legible, and "M." as a small initial in the middle.

Theresa M. Keaveny, State Policy Lead
Climate Land Leaders
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