



MINNESOTA FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

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Senator Putnam and Senate Ag Committee Members -

The Minnesota Farmers' Market Association **strongly supports** the revised language for SNAP in S.F. 3404 "Agricultural Marketing and Development appropriation modification."

MFMA is the statewide association that supports the record-high number of 375 farmers' markets in Minnesota and the Tribal Nations. We develop curriculum and train market management and the 10,000 or so vendors who produce and make food across the state on food safety, food laws and licensing, sales tax on foods, SNAP EBT, WIC, etc. Since October 2023, we've taught 74 new farmers' markets and direct marketing farmers how to become authorized SNAP EBT retailers.

Currently, about 1/3 of our markets (~100) can afford to offer SNAP EBT due to the high cost of administration to the markets. SNAP is a huge benefit to Minnesotans who are fighting food insecurity, and to the food farmers and food makers who sell SNAP eligible items, but a 100% cost to the market to manage it. While MN DHS does provide the free card reader and free transactions (providing the market has access to an ATT or Verizon tower), markets still must pay for:

- 100s or 1,000s of SNAP tokens, depending on the volume of SNAP shoppers
- Secure containers to store the tokens, and accompanying Market Bucks and Produce Market Bucks
- Weekly paperwork to complete to count tokens, write checks to or ACH vendors, organize tokens for the next week, submit Market Bucks reports
- Ongoing collaboration with community partners to advertise the market's acceptance of SNAP
- Annual PCI compliance for the card reader
- Annual tax reporting

We worked with the MDA's grants team to help broaden the language in S.F. 3404 to encompass staff costs, infrastructure, etc., for the various food access programs available at farmers' markets. This is needed financial support and appreciate the Committee's willingness to broaden the category of eligible expenses.

Thank you very much for this \$200,000 appropriation and for accepting our testimony.

Sincerely,

Kathy Zeman
Executive Director
Minnesota Farmers' Market Association

MISSION

MFMA provides services, programs, and leadership that support and promote farmers' markets across Minnesota and the Tribal Nations.