



Minnesota's Agricultural Fertilizer *Research & Education Council*

a farmer-led program to advance soil fertility research,
technology development, and education

March 11, 2024

Members of the State and Local Government and Veterans Committee

RE: SF 3719 Referral—Request to Extend AFREC

Bill Status: SF 3719 (Putnam, Weber, Gustafson, Kupec and Westrom) has been referred to your committee.

Why Is AFREC Important to Minnesota?

Benefits and the rich history of this 15-year-old program are summarized in the attached “*Factsheet for Legislators*”.

Urgent Legislative Action Needed!

AFREC is funded by a 40 cents/ton fee on fertilizer sales, which are collected by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MN Statutes 18C.425). This authority is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2024. Associated Council functions (established in MN Statutes 18C.70, 71 & 80) are scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2025.

What is the Agricultural Community Request?

- Extend the authority for the MN Department of Agriculture to collect AFREC’s portion of fertilizer inspection fee (18C.425) for an additional ten (10) years.
- Retain AFREC’s fee at 40 cents/ton.
- Extend 18C.70, 18C.71 and 18C.80 for an additional ten (10) years.

Why are we requesting a Ten-Year Extension?

- Complex projects related to environmental impacts, climate change, soil health and carbon sequestration require years to decades to complete. Five-year legislative extensions do not match the research pace.
- Short extension create uncertainty for researchers when seeking AFREC funds especially when graduate students and/or post-docs are required.

The AFREC Council, representing the Ag Community, soil fertility researchers and the MN Department of Agriculture, appreciate your support during this Legislative Session.

Sincerely,

Grant Anderson, AFREC Chair
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