

Senator Ann Rest
Senate Committee on Taxes
Capitol 328
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 30, 2024

Dear Chair Rest and committee members,

The Nature Conservancy appreciates the opportunity to comment on the delete-everything amendment to the committee's omnibus package, SF5234 (Rest). We are grateful for the inclusion of SF4216 (Weber), Conservation Grazing Property Tax Modification, in the DE amendment. As the committee heard earlier this session, this provision would support TNC's ability to conduct prairie management on certain tax-exempt lands by enabling the use of rotational, ecologically driven cattle grazing by private ranchers as a conservation tool.

Cattle grazing is an important component in maintaining the health and vigor of our state's grasslands and is widely recognized as a cost-effective tool for prairie management. Targeted conservation grazing is generally very limited in both space and duration, and when strategically employed, helps control invasive species, like cool-season, nonnative grasses, which are one of the greatest threats to our prairies. With only one percent of native prairie remaining in the state of Minnesota, it is crucial we are able to employ the best conservation management practices, like cattle grazing, to restore these landscapes into the flourishing habitats that provide benefits for Minnesota into the future.

This budget-neutral provision provides innumerable conservation benefits, including robust habitat for wildlife and pollinators, carbon sequestration, and preservation of native grasses, to restore the health of our native prairies and grasslands via some of TNC's tax-exempt parcels. Thank you again for the inclusion of SF4216 in the DE amendment for SF5234.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Director
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota

Angelica Anderson
Government Relations Specialist
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota