



**LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT**

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March 11th, 2025

Minnesota Senate Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband and Rural Development Finance and Policy Committee

Dear Senator Putnam and Committee members,

I am writing on behalf of Land Stewardship Project's (LSP's) 4,500 member households made up of farmers, rural residents, and supporters in strong support of SF 2147. As part of LSP's mission to foster an ethic of stewardship and promote sustainable agriculture, we have active soil health hubs and grazing groups in Southeast MN and Western, MN and many of those famers have livestock or are interested in brining livestock in their operation for the soil health benefits they provide and additional income streams. One of the five principles of soil health is integrating livestock into your farming system to build soil organic matter, allow cattle to graze crop residue and naturally fertilize their fields. A few of the barriers of introducing livestock is having funding for fencing, watering systems, and proper shelter for animals which is where the Livestock Investment Grant can be a gamechanger.

We support the proposed changes which would provide a 50 percent cost share on qualifying investments up to \$20,000 and a 20 percent cost share on the next \$200,000 for a cost share maximum of \$220,000. This is a change from the current 10 percent match on projects up to \$250,000. If a farmer has a \$5,000 project cost, the \$500 they could earn with this grant may not be worth the effort to apply and especially leaves out beginning farmers who may not have the capital to cover the remaining 90 percent of the project. Adjusting the cost-share percentages will serve more farmers and in turn allow more farmers to support their local feed mill, seed and supply stores that thrive on small livestock producers.

We urge the committee to support this policy change in SF2147.

Thank you,

Laura Schreiber, Government Relations Director