



April 4, 2025

Dear Senator Putnam,

I want to thank you and the Senate Agriculture, Broadband and Rural Development Committee for your work in drafting SF2458 Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Board of Animal Health (BAH), and the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) budget establishment. Our agency appreciates your commitment to Minnesota's agriculture sector and community prosperity throughout our great state. I look forward to working with you all to craft a bill that continues to invest in Minnesota's farmers and our communities.

I am pleased that many of the Governor's recommendations are included in SF2458 including an operating adjustment to maintain agency services for the MDA, BAH and AURI, supplementing the Agricultural Emergency Account, and including budget neutral policy provisions such as the food licensing modernization, Rural Finance Program updates, seed potato certification statute modernization, modifications to the Good Food Access Program and the grain license fee update. The inclusion of these appropriations and policy will help the MDA to maintain and improve agency services.

This bill also aims to address several important areas of the agricultural industry, including additional funding for the elk and wolf depredation compensation account, the MDA meat inspection program, farm safety health and wellness, the AGRI Protect Grant, Local Food Purchasing Assistance and more. Many of these proposed requests and recommendations came from the MDA's public portal and meetings in which Minnesotans were invited to share their policy and budget priorities.

This strong bill and budget will help enhance the MDA's ability to respond to critical issues facing Minnesota agriculture in a time of extreme uncertainty for our family farmers and agriculture related businesses. The investments and policy in this bill will keep our industry strong and competitive. The MDA looks forward to continuing to work with the committee to cultivate a resilient agriculture budget bill that works to protect integrity of our food supply, the health of our environment, and the strength and resilience of our agricultural economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Thom Petersen'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thom Petersen
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture