Minnesota Farm Bureau

April 21, 2025

Senator Aric Putnam, Chair
Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee
3215 Minnesota Senate Bldg
95 University Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Opposition to SF 3083 (McEwen)

Dear Chair Putnam and Members of the Committee,

Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) is a nonpartisan, grassroots general farm organization representing over 31,000 farm and ranch families statewide. Thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition to SF 3083.

Seed treatments are an important crop protection tool as farmers continue to grow a safe and sustainable supply of food, fuel, and fiber. They allow farmers to target pests directly and precisely, providing critical early season protection and minimizing the need for additional pesticide applications later in the growing season. This targeted approach lowers environmental impact through reduced frequency and quantity of pesticide use. Additionally, these crop protection tools support environmentally beneficial practices such as reduced-tillage or no-till, which promote healthy soils and reduce erosion.

All crop protection tools, including seed treatments and pesticides, are stringently regulated by the federal government under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA). For farmers, the safety of their families, employees, consumers, and the environment is the top priority, and they rely on the science-based review process at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate and provide safety guidance on pesticide use. Before registering a pesticide, EPA must determine there is a "reasonable certainty of no harm" according to clearly outlined safety factors in the FFDCA.

With these guidelines and regulations already in place, MFBF opposes additional state and local regulations that would prevent farmers from planting seed that has already been approved by the federal government. Likewise, MFBF opposes state and local restrictions on the use of agricultural chemicals that have gone through federal government approval, including neonicotinoids. SF 3083 would directly restrict farmers' ability to utilize both federally approved crop protection tools and seed.

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The requirement for formal verification of need prior to the use of treated seed would significantly disrupt farmers' ability to make timely and economically sensible decisions. Adding layers of certification and bureaucracy undermines the practical flexibility required for effective farm management while ignoring the clear environmental benefits of seed treatments.

Compared to other pesticide applications, seed treatments help mitigate impacts to surface water and reduce air quality issues. It is contradictory that this legislation seeks to consider new administrative authority and monitoring of surface water and air for pesticides while restricting use of a crop protection tool that minimizes environmental impacts. We believe that such decisions would be better deliberated through the legislative process where there is greater opportunity for public input.

MFBF recognizes the ecological importance of pollinators and supports adherence to EPA labels in the application of pesticides. However, the proposed pollinator labeling statements create a precedent for going beyond what EPA has deemed critical information to include on the label.

While SF 3083 is being heard on an informational basis, MFBF appreciates the opportunity to give the perspective of our members who use these important crop protection tools on a regular basis. We urge the author to reconsider these provisions moving forward and to work collaboratively with agricultural stakeholders to identify targeted, science-driven strategies that genuinely balance environmental protection with the viability of family farms. Thank you again for allowing us to comment.

Sincerely,

Dan Glessing, President
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation

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