



March 27th, 2025

Senator Foug Hawj
95 University Avenue West
Minnesota Senate Building Room 3231
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hawj and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association's (MCGA) nearly 7,000 members I appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments in support of several programs within the Clean Water Fund (CWF) article of the A-1 DE amendment for SF 2865.

We encourage the Clean Water Council (CWC) and the legislature to continue to find ways to maximize CWF dollars for on the ground projects. We are happy to see a few of the programs listed below being recommended that will help give farmers the tools they need to make decisions and apply farming techniques that will provide clean water benefits for all Minnesotans.

MCGA strongly supports the following recommended programs:

Conservation Equipment Assistance- We greatly appreciate the Council adding this program recommendation two years ago. Since then, farmer interest in soil health practice implementation has been proven out by the tremendous popularity of this program. Since this program's original inception as a pilot in 2022 MDA has received over \$24.5 million in funding requests vs the \$5.2 million that has been made available from general and clean water funds. The upfront cost of retrofitting or buying new equipment is often the biggest barrier to farmers as they look for ways to implement different tillage or cover cropping systems on their farms as well as the broader suite of practices that can enhance soil health and improve water quality. Prior to this program the only options available to farmers who were interested in trying a new practice and offsetting some of the risk, was either through a cost-share program and/or renting equipment through their local SWCD. These programs may have had farmer interest, but they were not designed for large scale adoption. It is our view that the best way to expand adoption of these practices is by farmers owning their own equipment and working with other farmers to do custom work. We would encourage the legislature and the CWC to consider this when evaluating the various soil health programs that currently exist to encourage farmer adoption of soil health practices.

AgBMP Loan Program- The AgBMP Loan Program complements several programs including the Conservation Equipment Assistance Program that will allow Minnesota farmers to take advantage of low interest loans and begin to implement soil health practices to benefit clean water.

MDA Technical Assistance – We appreciate the CWC's and the legislature's continued support for this program as it funds research for on-farm demonstrations like Discovery Farms that increases education and promotion of best management practices on the farm.

Expanding the Ag Weather Station Network (MDA)- These weather stations give farmers the local information they need to make the best possible agronomic decisions regarding planting dates, crop protection application timing, and more. This detailed local information will create opportunities to more effectively utilize crop protection chemical applications. With precise information on disease risk due to weather conditions, farmers can delay disease prevention applications until risk is high in their area. Additionally, information on when weather conditions are favorable for effective crop protectant application means less unusable applications, which has a benefit for water quality in Minnesota. We strongly support the funding recommendation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written comments. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to MCGA's Senior Public Policy Director Amanda Bilek at abilek@mncorn.org

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Kanten". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Kanten
President
Minnesota Corn Growers Association