

April 10, 2025

Dear Chair Marty,

I want to thank you and the Senate Finance Committee for hearing S.F. 2458, the Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Board of Animal Health (BAH), and the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) budget establishment. Our agency appreciates the commitment to Minnesota's agriculture sector and community prosperity throughout our state. I look forward to working with the committee 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 S.F. 2458 including an adjustment to maintain agency services for the MDA, BAH and AURI as well as a supplement to the Agricultural Emergency Account. Also included are 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 timely 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 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 our food system. The investments and policy in this bill will keep the industry strong and competitive. The MDA looks forward to continuing to work with the committee to cultivate a resilient and fiscally responsible agriculture budget bill that protects the integrity of our food supply, the health of our environment, and the strength of our agricultural economy.

Sincerely,



Thom Petersen
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture