

February 18, 2025

Chair Tou Xiong
Senate State and Local Government Committee
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Xiong and committee members:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I am writing to share our support for the work of the Minnesota Attorney General's Office. Under the leadership of Attorney General Keith Ellison the office has prioritized and built out resources to help protect fair, open and competitive markets.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. At our annual convention in November, MFU members voted to make Ensuring Fair Markets a key priority and identified investing in antitrust agencies as important to that goal.

Because of the investments legislators made in recent years, the Attorney General's Office has been able to expand their antitrust enforcement team and establish a separate Antitrust Division. This investment is helping protect Minnesotans from powerful companies that abuse their market power. Highlights of that work include:

- A 2022 lawsuit with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) alleging pesticide manufactures Syngenta and Corteva used loyalty programs to raise costs on farmers.
- A 2023 lawsuit with the Department of Justice (DOJ) alleging Agri Stats and major meatpackers colluded to fix the price of meat and raise costs on consumers.
- The 2023 investigation of the Sanford-Fairview merger and subsequent implementation of a nation-leading law strengthening standards for large healthcare mergers.
- A 2025 lawsuit with the FTC alleging John Deere has monopolized the market for repairs of its tractors and combines.

Corporate consolidation is pervasive and growing, and limits rural economic vitality, stifles innovation and entrepreneurship, drives down wages and otherwise limits people's voices in our economy and democracy. One way for legislators to address these harms is to ensure strong investment in the Minnesota Attorney General's Office. If you have any questions, please contact our Antimonopoly Director, Justin Stofferahn, at justin@mfu.org or (612) 594-1252 (C). Thank you for considering the needs and perspectives of Minnesota's farm families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being more prominent than the last name "Wertish".

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union