

March 18, 2025

Chair Ann Rest  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
Capitol Room 328  
Saint Paul MN 55155

Dear Chair Rest and members of the Senate Taxes Committee

The undersigned organizations want to voice our support for SF 960 the Buffer Property Tax Exemption. This bill would address an issue of fairness as it pertains to acres in compliance with Minnesota buffer law.

During the 2015 session the Minnesota legislature passed the buffer law, requiring a perennial vegetative buffer of 50 feet along Minnesota's public waters and 16.5 feet along public ditches. The goal of the law was to reduce runoff and erosion into Minnesota waterways. Minnesota Farmers invested a considerable amount of time and money to implement buffers on their property and by 2019 there was near universal compliance with the law. This high rate of compliance has remained intact and in June of 2024, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) reported that 99.8 percent of parcels requiring a buffer are in compliance with the law<sup>i</sup>.

Minnesota has distributed over \$95,000,000, a combination of general funds<sup>ii</sup> and dedicated Clean Water Funds<sup>iii</sup>, since 2017 to local government units to implement and enforce the buffer law. Though it should be noted that no money was ever used to create a state cost-share or grant program to help the people responsible for implementing the law, Minnesota's farmers.

It has been 10 years since the buffer law was enacted. SF 960 addresses a fundamental issue of fairness, reducing the tax burden on acres that were removed from agriculture production due to a state policy decision. Farmers did their part by getting into compliance with the law. It is now time for the state to address this issue of tax fairness in 2025.

Sincerely,

Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers  
Minnesota Barley Growers Association  
Minnesota Corn Growers Association  
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation  
Minnesota Farmers Union

Minnesota Pork Producers Association  
Minnesota Soybean Growers Association  
Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association  
Minnesota Turkey Growers Association  
Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association

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<sup>i</sup> <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/node/12041>

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<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/riparian-protection-aid>

<sup>iii</sup> [https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=SF1&type=bill&version=0&session=ls89&session\\_year=2015&session\\_number=1](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=SF1&type=bill&version=0&session=ls89&session_year=2015&session_number=1); (Line 51.20)

[https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF707&type=bill&version=4&session=ls90&session\\_year=2017&session\\_number=0](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF707&type=bill&version=4&session=ls90&session_year=2017&session_number=0) (line 52.21)

[https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF653&version=latest&session=ls91&session\\_year=2019&session\\_number=0](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF653&version=latest&session=ls91&session_year=2019&session_number=0) (Line 48.31)

[https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF13&version=latest&session=ls92&session\\_year=2021&session\\_number=1](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF13&version=latest&session=ls92&session_year=2021&session_number=1) (Line 52.24)

[https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF1999&version=latest&session=ls93&session\\_year=2023&session\\_number=0](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF1999&version=latest&session=ls93&session_year=2023&session_number=0) (Line 52.33)