



305 Roselawn Ave E | Suite 200 | St. Paul, MN 55117
Phone: (651) 639-1223 | www.mfu.org

February 18, 2026

Chair Sandra L. Pappas
Senate Committee on Capital Investment
2113 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: MFU support for Rural Finance Authority (RFA) Bonding

Dear Chair Pappas and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to express strong support for authorizing the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) to borrow funds to replenish the Rural Finance Authority (RFA). We appreciate the Governor including \$50 million in his request and value your efforts to approve new borrowing authority. This will limit the potential of a funding lapse and provide certainty to farm families at a time when they need it.

MFU is a grassroots membership organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities since 1918. While our members are diverse in their operations, they are unified in the fact that affordable financing presents a significant challenge, particularly when families are already faced with uncertainty related to challenged commodity prices, increasing input costs, and generational farm transition.

At our annual convention in November, we heard loud and clear that our members are under financial stress due to strained trade relationships, depressed commodity prices, cancelled federal contracts, and increased prices for everything from inputs to healthcare. The low-interest loans made available by the RFA help young farmers, farm families rebuilding after natural disasters, and others reinvesting in their operations. With the present uncertainty in the agriculture economy, more farmers may lean on this state program for affordable financing.

We thank you for considering this proposal early in session. Acting early on this priority will give added certainty to family farmers who rely on these programs. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-3047. 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 written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union