Latino Economic Development Center
Centro para el Desarrollo Económico Latino

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January 18, 2023

Chair Samantha Vang
House Agriculture Committee
545 State Office Building St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-3709

Chair Vang and members of the House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee,

The Latino Economic Development Center writes in support of House File 103 and House File 463.

As an organization we work to help emerging farmers. We strive to provide a complete one-stop agricultural business program for all our clients. Over the last 10 years, LEDC has developed multiple ways to help Latino farmers in Minnesota both start and grow their farm businesses. We provide technical assistance, business development, access to capital and markets, as well as specialize in Organic and GAP certification for your farm. We believe all of these services provide the farmers with whom we work the best possibility of long-term success. We work one-on-one with each of our clients and will often travel to meet clients in their home communities. Below are more details about our services.

Since 2014, LEDC has distributed $736,400 in 41 agricultural loans to 29 farms, making us one of the most active CDFI agricultural lenders in the country. The demographic breakdown of these farms is: 18 Latino-owned, 8 Hmong-owned, 2 Black-owned urban farms, and 1 women-owned urban farm. Since 2014, we have been an active Authorized Lender for the Rural Finance Authority (RFA) of Minnesota for their Micro-Loan Program and have accessed $168,000 through this program. In 2020, we distributed $340,000 of MDA Cares Act funding to 47 BIPOC farmers and 133 BIPOC agricultural workers.

HF 103 and 463 will allow us to continue this work and help emerging farmers throughout Minnesota. Thank you, Chair Vang, and Representative Burkel for carrying these bills and supporting farmers.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Aaron Blyth

Agricultural Department Director

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