

To: The Minnesota House Committee on Agriculture Finance & Policy

Re: Support for the University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative (HF1492)

February 24, 2023

Dear Chair Vang and committee members,

We at PURIS Foods would like to express our strong support for HF1492, a bill that would fund the Forever Green Initiative at the University of Minnesota.

Consumer packaged goods are increasingly marketing environmental and sustainability advantages to gain momentum in the market. Forever Green crops fit squarely into the model that food manufacturers are looking for in order to meet consumer needs. Crops that deliver nutrition while improving soil and water quality can drive a premium on the market if the story of their production is transparent.

PURIS proves an example of the sustainable food and agriculture model with the commercialization of pea protein from yellow field peas. Over the last 20 years, we have invested in the breeding, production, processing infrastructure, and market development of field peas and pea protein. In 2019 we were excited to commission our second pea protein processing facility in Dawson, MN (District 15) bringing over 90 jobs to the community and increasing the acres of pea production to hundreds of thousands. Peas are an example of crops that can add diversity and soil and water health improvements to Minnesota farmers. The Forever Green Initiative is spearheading the development of other crops that have the potential to transform the economic potential of MN farmland by delivering sustainable nutrition, ecosystem services, and product-market fit for the new consumer.

Investment into the connections between farmers, manufacturers, and brands is critical for the success of a new crop. We all know that simply growing a crop doesn't equal success; success is when we have a thriving supply chain that can transform the crop into its final form - food, feed, or fuel - and create more value per acre than we were able to get before. The Forever Green Initiative understands this and is considering the holistic success of the crop in its efforts by including processing and market development - critical for the adoption of these crops.

By providing stable, ongoing funding to this important program, passage of HF1492 would enable Forever Green to advance its mission and deliver on its transformative potential for Minnesota and beyond.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lauren Perez
Chief of Staff
PURIS Holdings, Inc.