

April 14, 2023

Re: PAN support of HF 2278

Dear Chair Olson and Lead Garofalo,

On behalf of the Pesticide Action Network (PAN), I am writing today in support of HF2278 the omnibus agriculture finance and policy bill as authored by Chair Samantha Vang. We extend our thanks to Chair Vang for bringing this bill forward as it is written. We are especially glad to see the following provisions:

The bill has funding of the already established Pollinator Research Account. This money will go for, among other things, the development and promotion of practices that can reduce the effects of pesticides on pollinators and calls for the development and promotion of integrated pest management; including pest economic thresholds.

There is vitally needed funding to identify and regulate pesticides containing PFAS. This is an issue that has impacted too many Minnesotans already. According to Minnesota Department of Agriculture testimony, there are currently over 2,000 registered pesticide products in Minnesota that contain the “forever chemicals” known as PFAS. This number does not include non-ag use or inert ingredients. We all need to work together to resolve this threat. The first step is to stop using PFAS products.

The bill has new language to address concerns first brought forward by the Department of Agriculture back in 2016 in their Special Registration Review of Neonicotinoids. Regarding treated seeds, this bill language calls for the MDA: to develop user guidance; to collaborate with the University of Minnesota; to identify the research needs and to develop science-based best management practices for situations where pesticide-treated seed may be appropriate and this would include a process for public comment on proposed BMPs.

The bill also calls for funding for a University of Minnesota heritage seed program.

The Pesticide Action Network, working with Midwest Farmers of Color, also supports the many thoughtful and needed financial provisions in support of emerging and BIPOC farmers.

We ask for your strong support of HF2278 because it supports diversity in agriculture on many levels. It is a strong and diverse agricultural economy that will make Minnesota grow even more as an agricultural leader in many ways.

Sincerely,

Chris Cowen
Contract Lobbyist
Pesticide Action Network