

February 21, 2022

To: The Minnesota House Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy

Re: Supporting value chain businesses advancing Continuous Living Cover agriculture (HF1645)

Dear Chair Vang and committee members,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our strong support for (HF1645) which would advance the development of Minnesota businesses focused on Continuous Living Cover (CLC) agriculture. We imagine a future close at hand when these companies rise as 21st-century leaders in Minnesota's agriculture and food sector, expanding options for Minnesota growers while supporting profitability, sustainability, and resilience.

Market-based CLC agriculture combines the excellent conservation outcomes of natural landscapes—such as prairie and woodland ecosystems—with the profitability of high-demand crops and diverse revenue streams.

State-supported basic research as well as grassroots innovation have brought new CLC crops and cropping systems to the cusp of commercial launch and scaling. These crops and cropping systems include Kernza Perennial Grain, hybrid hazelnuts, winter camelina, and elderberries, among others. Private companies and government agencies are increasingly turning to the agriculture sector for innovative ways to meet their environmental commitments, and CLC crops are perfectly suited to meet this new demand.

Minnesota is home to a growing cadre of new CLC-oriented businesses taking CLC innovations to market. A number of these businesses are led by or involve new and beginning farmers, BIPOC individuals and communities, and young entrepreneurs dedicating their lives to a profitable, sustainable, resilient agriculture sector in Minnesota. Similar to long-running State investments in renewable energy, dedicated State investment is needed and warranted to accelerate the supply chains and markets that will support expanded production of CLC crops and begin realizing these systems' public benefits at scale.

The Legislature made a pilot-scale investment of \$500,000 in this program last year, but the need far outstrips the resources currently available. HF1645 would accelerate the development of CLC value chains by strategically investing in companies poised for commercial breakthrough, delivering significant public benefits to Minnesotans and further solidifying Minnesota as a national and international leader in 21st century agricultural innovation.

Public investment now will spur further innovation and private investment, creating new economic and community development opportunities for our state while also protecting soil, water, biodiversity, and climate.

We urge you to support this important measure during the 2023 legislative session.

Sincerely,

A-Frame Farms
Albert Lea Seed
Artisan Naan Bakery
Central Minnesota & Duluth Young Farmers Coalition
Clean River Partners, Rice County
Conservation Minnesota
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)
Fountain Ark Farms
Friends of the Mississippi River
Great River Greening
Harvest Nation Inc.
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance
Land Stewardship Project
League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region ILO
League of Women Voters Minnesota
Mad Agriculture
Midwest Elderberry Cooperative
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Minnesota Rural Water Association
Minnesota Well Owners Organization
MN350
Perennial Pantry
Perennial Promise Growers Cooperative
PURIS
Regenerative Agriculture Alliance
Region Five Development Commission
Rural Advantage
Sustainable Farming Association
The Land Institute
True Vine Specialty Farms
Veterans Farming Initiative
Vote Climate
West Central Initiative
Yield10 Bioscience