



March 5, 2024

House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee
Chair Samantha Vang
545 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Vang and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) nearly 7,000 members I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide additional written testimony regarding MCGA's work on addressing nitrates in groundwater as well our support for HF 4044 and HF 3763.

Since the EPA responded to the petition last fall, Minnesota Corn has made clear our commitment to the shared goal of protecting drinking water. We have outline this commitment in four areas: partnerships, research, farm practices and policy.

We are committed to working with state agencies and organizations to help protect drinking water. As a benefit to our members, MCGA offers nitrate testing. We encourage all farmers and the general public to get their well tested and have had discussions with Minnesota Department of Health about using our water testing equipment, designed to screen for nitrates in drinking water, at local water clinics in southeast Minnesota.

Minnesota corn farmers are investing their own money through the corn checkoff into research to discover new technology, tools and best management practices to make farming more environmentally sustainable by increasing productivity through the efficient use of crop inputs. Since 2019, Minnesota Corn has invested more than \$11 million into university-led and on-farm research. Each year, Minnesota Corn invests approximately \$2 million to sponsor independent science-based research, mostly at the University of Minnesota, focused on nitrogen rate, timing, placement, and treatment.

MCGA is committed to working with farmers to help adopt and scale best practices that are effective and economically-viable. These aims can be bolstered through public policy to help offset some of the upfront costs farmer face when changing their practices. As an example, the Soil Health Financial Assistance Program has received overwhelming support and applications from farmers looking to change their practices that would address multiple soil health benefits, including nitrogen management. MCGA wants to thank the committee for their commitment to the program last year by making it an ongoing expenditure.

MCGA supports incentive-based tools to accelerate the implementation of practices proven to improve soil health and water quality. HF 4044 is another opportunity for the committee to encourage farmers to adopt on-farm practices that will help protect groundwater from nitrogen

We are dedicated to identifying and promoting opportunities for corn growers while enhancing quality of life

loss. The Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification program works with farmers to implement and maintain conservation practices that promote water quality. Providing a property tax incentive offers a modest incentive to Minnesota farmers to become certified.

We would also like to express our support for HF 3763, which would secure base funding the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Growth, Research and Innovation program and ensure it will continue to offer a robust set of grant programs to assist Minnesota's diverse agriculture sector with growth opportunities, including the Biofuels Infrastructure grant program.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. We look forward to working with the committee as it relates to nitrogen going forward. If you or your staff have any questions, please feel free to reach out to MCGA's Senior Public Policy Director Amanda Bilek at 952-460-3604 or at abilek@mncorn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Allen-Tully".

Dana Allen-Tully
President
Minnesota Corn Growers Association