

February 27, 2025

Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy
G3 Minnesota State Capitol



RE: Permitting Reform

Chair Baker and Committee members,

Minnesota's farmers and agribusinesses remain stymied in their growth potential as Minnesota continues to be a difficult place to grow and develop businesses. A drawn-out and inconsistent permitting process paired with an increasingly burdensome tax and labor environment all add costs that exceed the willingness of farmers and other food and agribusiness owners to continue investing in their farms and businesses here in Minnesota. For these reasons, the Minnesota Pork Producers Association supports House File 8.

For Minnesota's more than 3,000 family pig farmers, a timely, predictable, and consistent environmental permitting process is paramount. The cost to permit a pig barn in Minnesota is significantly higher than in our neighboring states according to a study done by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The review process can also be delayed, with any administrative pause further delaying timelines, increasing costs, and even halting a project altogether. Many decisions and commitments are being made by farmers before submitting a permit; a consistent environmental review and permit approval timeline is critical.

Just like every other Minnesotan, pig farmers deeply care for our state's valuable natural resources and are committed to operating within their permits and doing the right thing for our animals, our communities, and the environment. This discussion isn't about reducing thresholds or changing environmental protections. Farmers know what it takes to manage an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable farm. In rural Minnesota, agriculture, specifically livestock production, is a cornerstone economic engine that drives opportunities for local businesses, creates jobs, and adds vibrancy to rural communities. Meaningful permitting reform is a vital step in the process needed to further unlock the potential of agriculture in Minnesota.

Pig farmers and the Minnesota Pork Producers Association look forward to engaging with legislators and the agencies to find solutions that meet the needs of Minnesota's family farmers while creating opportunities for future generations of farmers and agribusiness owners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Selvik". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Todd Selvik
President, Minnesota Pork Producers Association