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March 13, 2023

Chair Samantha Vang  
House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Vang and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share our strong support for your bill to expand the down payment assistance grant program at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) (HF1057). This popular and successful program is a meaningful way to help new and emerging farmers overcome barriers to owning farmland.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. Core to our grassroots policy is the idea the value of land ownership. Owning your own land promotes stability, economic mobility, and is a key way that farmers build intergenerational wealth. Land ownership also cultivates responsibility and care for community.

That is why we supported Chair Vang in her effort to establish a new grant program to help farmers overcome a key hurdle to purchasing land—pulling together a down payment. After impressive demand for the first round of grants, we are grateful to see the legislature renew discussions about replenishing funding and strengthening the program emerging farmers.

Any new farmer on the land is a win for our state and agriculture communities. I appreciate your consideration of this investment and hope it earns your support. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at [stu@mfu.org](mailto:stu@mfu.org) or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for your work on behalf of farmers and all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Wertish  
President, Minnesota Farmers Union