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27 February 2023

To: Chair Vang, Vice-Chair Pursell, and Members of the Committee

I am writing to request the Committee's support for HF1744 which will provide grant funding for the Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund which is administered by The Good Acre.

I am a member of the Board of Directors of Hunger Solutions. I grew up on a family farm near Hayward, MN and spent my career as an advocate for farmers, cooperatives, and rural communities. Since retiring in 2013, I've dedicated myself to volunteer advocacy in support of anti-hunger programs.

Throughout my career, there has been an on-going struggle with how to help new and emerging farmers get established and how to promote greater diversity in agriculture and food production. The LEAFF Program which will benefit from the funding provided in this bill will help. The program lays a framework that will help strengthen the local food system and ensure that farmers of color have the market access they need to run a sustainable farm business.

In addition, it also will assure that more fresh produce grown by emerging farmers in Minnesota will make it to local food shelves. In this way, it will help to make sure our most vulnerable citizens have access to the very best of Minnesota's bountiful harvest.

I urge the Committee's support for HF1744.

