

February 25, 2022

To: The Minnesota House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture Finance & Policy

Re: Supporting Continuous Living Cover agriculture businesses (HF2720)

Dear Chair Sundin and committee members,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our strong support for HF2720, 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, a regenerative poultry silvopasture system, winter camelina, and elderberry, 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.

HF2720 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 2022 legislative session.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI)

Albert Lea Seed

Artisan Grain Collaborative

Audubon Minnesota

Beth Dooley's Kitchen

Birchwood Cafe

Clean River Partners

Doughp Creations

Estling Farms, Inc

Friends of the Mississippi River

Forever Green Initiative

Great River Greening

Green Lands Blue Waters

Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance

Land Stewardship Project

League of Women Voters Minnesota

Mad Agriculture

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Midwest Elderberry Cooperative

Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Minnesota Farmers Union

MNL, Inc. (Minnesota Native Landscapes)

North Dakota State University

Perennial Pantry, SBC

Perennial Promise Growers Cooperative

Regenerative Agriculture Alliance

Renewing the Countryside

Rural Advantage

Savanna Institute

Sustainable Farming Association

The Land Institute

The Plant Pathways Company, Inc.

Tree-Range Farms

University of Minnesota

West Central Initiative