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Representative Samatha Vang, Chair
Minnesota House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF 3411 (Fischer) AFREC Renewal - Support

The Minnesota Crop Production Retailers supports renewing the Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC), extending the sunset date for ten (10) years for the council, and maintaining the associated funding as recommended by the AFREC Council.

The research supported by AFREC has led to advancements in fertilizer efficiency, a better understanding of how to deploy cover crops, and strategies to improve soil health and protect water quality. We are concerned that sunsetting this valuable program and ending the peer-reviewed research would limit progress on developing and sharing innovations in farming practices. A few highlights of AFREC's impact include the following:

Nutrient Management

Helping farmers improve their nutrient use efficiency is key to producing more food with less environmental impact. AFREC provides valuable science-based research to guide evidence-based decision-making.

Soil Health & Water Quality

Minimizing nitrate loss to groundwater and surface water is crucial to maintaining clean water for all Minnesotans, from private well water to lakes, streams, and rivers that provide fishing, boating, and swimming opportunities. AFREC has funded projects exploring strategies for reducing nitrogen fertilizer application and the benefits of expanding precision agricultural practices.

Education & Outreach

Of additional value is that AFREC funds conferences and communication efforts to help educate farmers and crop consultants about key findings. AFREC research is featured in the annual Nutrient Management Conference and Nitrogen Conference.

Check out the AFREC overview video:

<https://youtu.be/ALbJyOOZmJk?si=2USYmljLXIv006-L>

We encourage the committee members to maintain AFREC and extend the sunset for 10 years.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Lee Helgen, Executive Director
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers