



April 5, 2022

Chair Mike Sundin

House Agriculture Committee  
417 State Office Building  
St Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 4366- Supplemental Finance Bill

Chair Sundin and members of the committee,

The Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) appreciates the opportunity to share written testimony on behalf of its nearly 30,000 members on the provisions included in HF 4366 as amended.

Thank you for the work this committee has done over the last few weeks. We appreciate the conversations and the ability to share the perspectives of our members. From this work, there are pieces of HF 4366 as amended that Farm Bureau **supports** through the priority issues identified by our Board of Directors based on our grassroots policy including:

- **Supply chain:** MFBF prioritized addressing food and agriculture supply chain challenges both in the short- and long-term to ensure access to markets and a safe and secure food supply for everyone. This bill provides more than \$4 million in investments to meat processing through education, grants and inspectors to help strengthen a critical link of the food supply chain.
- **Sustainability:** Minnesota farmers and ranchers lead the way in climate-smart practices that improve our environment through voluntary stewardship. We appreciate the soil health language included in this bill is not restrictive to specific practices and includes things like technology and equipment to help get these practices on the ground and allow farmers to use soil health practices that make sense on their farm.
- **Research and Investment:** We have the opportunity to drive the future of agriculture in Minnesota through research, innovation and investment:
  - The Beginning Farmer Tax Credit has been an incredibly useful tool to support the next generation of farmers and ranchers. However, to ensure that the program functions as intended, the money for administering the tax credit is appreciated.
  - We support the additional dollars for research and equipment for the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI).
  - MFBF supports the policy changes to the rural mental health programs. This has been an incredible program for all of rural Minnesota and we appreciate the initiatives by the legislature

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to make sure this program works as intended, especially the changes to ensure that people who seek out these tools are protected.

- We support additional funding for grants to local units of government and tribal nations for noxious weed detection, control, and management. These are important partners in controlling noxious weeds that can wreak havoc on farmers and ranchers.
  - We appreciate the investment this bill makes into Farm Business Management through tuition assistance. This program provides educational opportunities for farmers and ranchers to be successful in a competitive agricultural environment and management education for decision making that achieves individual business goals. Making this program accessible to those that need it is an investment into a stronger future for Minnesota agriculture.
  - MFBF supports the formation of locally owned cooperatives for purposes of agricultural production. We support the creation of the grant program to help finance new agricultural cooperative.
- Unfortunately, HPAI has begun to spread in Minnesota. As we continue to help impacted farmers through this, it is a good reminder of the importance of preparing for and responding to animal disease. The money allocated to the Agricultural Emergency account and for the U of M Veterinary Diagnostic Lab is a much needed and appreciated investment.

While there are many things that Minnesota Farm Bureau supports in this bill, I also thank the committee for not including provisions that would establish a grain indemnity fund. MFBF opposes a state or check-off funded indemnity program. We look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders and the Department of Agriculture on finding a workable solution moving forward.

Finally, we reiterate our concerns with the provisions included in Article 2 that relate to treated seed. Treated seeds provide are important crop protection tools that allow farmers to use technology and precision to effectively grow their crops with the least impact to the environment.

Thank you for your work on this committee and for investing in the future of Minnesota agriculture.

Sincerely,



Dan Glessing  
President