

Economic infrastructure: the vital combination of public policy and funding needed to operate a just, responsive, and resilient source-to-table food economy [HF2881/ SF2940](#).

Marita Bujold

marita.bujold@centurylink.net

Local food initiatives developed in recent years in response to the absence of a just, responsive, and resilient food economy and the enduring impacts of food insecurity.

From their experiences operating in the local food landscape, these leadership initiatives have identified a set of demands and needs which could be met with public policy defined to support their operations and public funding to back those policies.

Resources are needed to support infrastructure (physical, operations, staffing, and foundational) necessary to operate a successful source-to-table food economy in rural, urban, and suburban communities.

Local leadership initiatives have identified the following demands and needs:

From the public- normalize the following:

- Access to culturally relevant foods daily (in schools, childcare, neighborhoods, etc)
- Access to fresh and prepared food, locally grown, affordable healthy food sources (all income levels)
- Access to resources defined by equity (food system wide)
- Food supply chains designed to be resilient in the face of unpredictable weather conditions
- Economy designed to eliminate waste (food, water, packaging, fossil fuel use) and its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions

From growers and food system leaders:

Physical infrastructure

On-site facilities for:

- Storage and cold storage
- Composting
- Greenhouses, hoop houses, seed saving storage
- Water conservation and reuse system

Marketing and distribution sites:

- Aggregation facilities and operations equipped to meet current and future needs
- Neighborhood Food Commons (direct market from growers to communities)
- Community kitchens-equipped for food preparation, preservation, processing, storage

Operations Infrastructure

Delivery, distribution, and storage system

- Collaborative transportation and distribution of harvests that removes growers' responsibility for this task (Let growers grow)
- System designed to be responsive to daily and seasonal needs

Markets and marketing

- Aggregation facilities and operations equipped to meet current and future needs
- Neighborhood Food Commons (direct market from growers to communities)
- Community kitchens-equipped for food preparation, preservation, processing, storage
- Direct Markets-from source to community services (schools, hospitals, childcare, eldercare, neighborhood food commons and businesses)
- Wholesale marketing and pricing support
- Standardization of wholesale products and packaging

On-site landscaping and facilities

- All-weather water management system (ecosystem-specific design)
- Comprehensive emergency prep and recovery plans and resources

Research and documentation and planning and evaluations

- Seed saving and crop diversity and energy management (sustainable energy sources)
- Seasonal operations and markets, goals, and delivery
- Farmer production planning and capacity generation

Staffing and training Infrastructure

- Fully staffed operations-resources to employ and provide a living for food web members
- Culinary training programs -food preparation and preservation and safety
- Food safety training for producers (growers and food preparation)
- Training programs for youth and adults for employment in the food web economy
- Paid Apprentice Programs to grow the food web operations

Foundational Infrastructure

- Access to land for cultivation, grazing, orchards,
- Food Web Economy leadership-coordinated practices between agencies and departments

The economic resiliency program created by [HF2881/ SF2940](#) outlines a coordinated, decentralized, locally adapted source-to-table food web economy that by design and practice is an energy management system for food.

It provides comprehensive infrastructure to create and operate a robust food web economy as a keystone to regional economic resilience.

Chair Hassan
Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Sencer-Mura

Re: HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

To Whom it May Concern,

As a leader in the emerging local food economy, I am writing to thank you for championing **HF2881/ SF2940** and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c) organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food avoiding 108 metric tons of greenhouse gases. They are redirecting foods to communities that have low/no access to fresh healthy, and culturally appropriate that are regionally sourced.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in **HF2881/ SF2940**. SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their Equity Eats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our Indigenous, BIPOC, and poor rural communities.

Our common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant local and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies. Crucially, **HF2881/ SF2940** recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

As communities make plans to live sustainably and manage the challenges of unpredictable weather conditions, the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy cannot be overstated. Operating a robust locally adapted food economy is a keystone to the region's economic stability and the well-being of our rural, urban, and suburban communities.



Dr Douglas Bibus, PhD

CEO and Founder, Lipid Technologies, LLC
Past President, The American Oil Chemists' Society
Emeritus, U of MN
doug@LipidLab.com

HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

Writer's name and organization

Email

Dear Chair Hassan, Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee, and Representative Sencer-Mura,

As a leader in the emerging local food economy, I am writing to thank you for championing [HF2881/SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c) organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food avoiding 108 metric tons of greenhouse gasses. They are redirecting foods to communities that have low/no access to fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate that are regionally sourced.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/SF2940](#). SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their EquityEats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our Indigenous, BIPOC, and poor rural communities.

Our common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies. Crucially, [HF2881/SF2940](#) recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role. This ensures groups will receive their culturally relevant foods, defining the assumptions and differences of commodity, created, cultivated perceptions of culturally relevant foods. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

As communities make plans to live sustainably and manage the challenges of unpredictable weather conditions, the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy cannot be overstated. Operating a robust locally adapted food economy is a keystone to the region's economic stability and the well-being of our rural, urban, and suburban communities. Thank you for your leadership.

Cynthia Johnson
Food Systems and Community Development

Habitat Management, Pearl's Pollinators and Perennials



Dear Chair Hassan and members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support [HF2881/ SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable and responsive food economy.

Dream of Wild Health is one of the longest serving Native American-led organizations in the Twin Cities. We are working with dozens of partners across the Twin Cities metro and greater Minnesota to strengthen the local food system and increase access to healthy, Indigenous foods. We support Native American economic development across the food chain - supporting farmers, food entrepreneurs, chefs, restaurants, and small businesses. One of the barriers to increasing economic opportunities is access to land and processing facilities for emerging Native American farmers. HF2881/SF2940 would help solve this critical gap by providing funding to build out the Center for Native American Food Sovereignty. This facility will serve the newly launched Upper Midwest Indigenous Farmers Incubator program, providing new Native farmers with access to land and facilities for storing, packing, and processing produce for market.

The decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#) provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by local food initiatives to support our operations and a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our communities.

Crucially, [HF2881/ SF2940](#) recognizes the role of BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the value of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Minnesota Department of Health's Climate and Health Equity Goals. We believe that our farm can serve as a replicable model for how to grow and adapt during a changing climate. The food web system outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#) will employ thousands of our neighbors to grow, prepare and preserve, deliver and store the food we need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Neely Snyder
Executive Director
Dream of Wild Health

HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

Kalvin Stern and Rachel Davis - Fiddlehead Knob LLC

fiddleheadknob@gmail.com

Dear Chair Hassan, Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee, and Representative Sencer-Mura,

As a leader in the emerging local food economy, I am writing to thank you for championing [HF2881/SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c) organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food avoiding 108 metric tons of greenhouse gases. They are redirecting foods to communities that have low/no access to fresh healthy, and culturally appropriate that are regionally sourced.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/SF2940](#). SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their Equity Eats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our Indigenous, BIPOC, and poor rural communities.

Our common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies.

Crucially, [HF2881/SF2940](#) recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

As communities make plans to live sustainably and manage the challenges of unpredictable weather conditions, the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy cannot be overstated. Operating a robust locally adapted food economy is a keystone to the region's economic stability and the well-being of our rural, urban, and suburban communities.

Thank you for your leadership.




Heidi Skoog Founder Serious Jam

hello@seriousjam.com

Dear Chair Hassan and members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee,

As a leader in the emerging local food economy, I am writing to ask you to support [HF2881/SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. Those testimonies revealed the host of local food initiatives operating in urban, rural, and suburban communities that emerged in response to the absence of a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy. While the focus of their operations varies, they share a common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally sourced foods. From their experiences operating in the local food landscape, these initiatives have identified a set of needs which could be met with public policy defined to support their operations and public funding to back those policies.

The decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/SF2940](#) provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by local food initiatives to support their operations and a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our communities.

Crucially, [HF2881/SF2940](#) recognizes the role of BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the value of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Minnesota Department of Health's Climate and Health Equity Goals. No one can control the weather, but with good leadership and planning, urban, rural, and suburban communities can be connected by an economy that by design and practice will meet the demands of food, water, and climate. The food web system outlined in [HF2881/SF2940](#) will employ thousands of our neighbors to grow, prepare and preserve, deliver and store the food we need to thrive.

I was introduced to this bill as I am the founder of a small jam company, and I seek out the small organic fruit farms and do my best to support their huge efforts to grow fruit in Minnesota. And as much as I can support them, I know of far too many farms that simply cannot sell all of their fruits because the cost of labor is high, the cost of selling the fruit is too low to allow for hiring labor, and the community infrastructure doesn't exist where one could take large amounts of fruit and preserve it for later use by the community or food shelves. The food that is grown by small farms in this state is incredible and we are so lucky to have those persevering farmers who keep going year after year. But wouldn't it be wonderful if they were paid enough for their efforts, and that a community could reap the benefits as a whole? If there were community kitchens and teachers to guide those who are new to preserving, and who can pass on knowledge to ensure some food security, then that can only benefit a community. And if there were local kitchens that

were VERY affordable for new food businesses to begin their journey in, then again the community could only benefit from this endeavor.

I hope you support this bill and all of its goals. Amazing things could happen with just a little bit more support.

Thank you for your leadership.

Heidi Skoog

Serious Jam. **Heidi Skoog Fruit Preservationist**

<https://www.seriousjam.com>

Priscilla Trinh
primoria1890@gmail.com

Dear Chair Hassan and members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee,

As a leader in the emerging local food economy, I am writing to ask you to support [HF2881/ SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. Those testimonies revealed the host of local food initiatives operating in urban, rural, and suburban communities that emerged in response to the absence of a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy. While the focus of their operations varies, they share a common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally sourced foods. From their experiences operating in the local food landscape, these initiatives have identified a set of needs which could be met with public policy defined to support their operations and public funding to back those policies.

The decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#) provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by local food initiatives to support their operations and a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our communities.

Crucially, [HF2881/ SF2940](#) recognizes the role of BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the value of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Minnesota Department of Health's Climate and Health Equity Goals. No one can control the weather, but with good leadership and planning, urban, rural, and suburban communities can be connected by an economy that by design and practice will meet the demands of food, water, and climate. The food web system outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#) will employ thousands of our neighbors to grow, prepare and preserve, deliver and store the food we need to thrive.

Thank you for your leadership.
Priscilla Trinh



Climate Land Leaders are working with compassion and commitment to address the climate crisis on their lands

March 12, 2024

Representative Hodan Hassan, Chair
Minnesota House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee

RE: HF2881

Dear Representative Hassan and Committee Members,

On behalf of Climate Land Leaders (CLL), I'd like to convey our support of HF 2881, the Headwaters Community Food and Water Economic Resiliency Program, sponsored by Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura.

The Climate Land Leaders Initiative activates landowners and farmers as leaders who make bold changes on their lands that reduce emissions, store more carbon in soils and plants and help ensure that farms and rural communities are increasingly resilient. Climate Land Leaders exchange knowledge, on-the-ground experiences and encouragement as they tackle ambitious strategies that are proven to alleviate climate change. Our members serve as leaders on climate policy and equity initiatives.

Climate Land Leaders supports HF 2881 because it will create and strengthen local food systems in a wholistic manner, by providing needed infrastructure and financial support to food producers, makers aggregators and marketers to grow, harvest, process and sell nutritious Minnesota-grown food. The measure centers emerging farmers and those who are Black, Indigenous and people of color, to raise culturally relevant fruits, vegetables and protein, and to build successful and resilient farming enterprises. Importantly, SF2881 supports farming and food production practices that protect surface and groundwater and reduce carbon emissions, helping achieve Minnesota's carbon reduction goals. Over time, this program will eliminate food deserts while promoting economic security for all people.

Thank you for your consideration of SF 2881.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tara M. Keaveny". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue circular background that matches the logo above.

State Policy Lead, Climate Land Leaders

tkeaveny@climatelandleaders.org

Responsive Leadership: establishing the just, sustainable and responsive source-to-table food web economy presented in [HF2881/ SF2940](#) as a keystone to economic resilience

Marita Bujold

marita.bujold@centurylink.net

Learning from the leaders

Local food initiatives in rural and urban communities emerged in recent years in response to the absence of a just, responsive, and resilient food economy and the enduring impacts of food insecurity.

The patchwork of leadership initiatives includes operations designed to reinvigorate indigenous food ways, grower cooperatives organized by black, immigrant and refugee communities, seed saving, urban agriculture and food preparation programs, youth learning and leadership programs, aggregation sites and markets, and community kitchens organized to serve under-resourced communities, food waste prevention, community supported agriculture, and farmers' markets and farm to school programs.

While the focus and form of these initiatives varies, they share a common purpose: generating capacity to normalize an economy designed to provide access to sources of healthy, culturally relevant food locally and regionally as a foundation for health and well-being.

From their experiences operating in the emerging local food economy, these leadership initiatives have identified a set of demands and needs which could be met with public policy defined to support current operations and generate capacity and public investment to back those policies.

Responsive leadership

The economic resiliency program outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#) aligns with the collective purpose of the leadership initiatives by creating a decentralized, coordinated locally adapted, source-to-table food web economy designed to meet the demands of food, water, and climate and nurture the health of communities and the ecosystems that sustain them.

By providing comprehensive economic infrastructure to normalize the operations of a robust food web economy, the bill's economic resiliency program provides a vital tool for responding effectively to our circumstances. With continuing concerns about supply chain disruptions, unpredictable weather conditions, and

enduring food insecurity, leadership to create a responsive, just, and sustainable food economy is both urgent and a practical necessity.

The food web economy outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#) would employ urban, suburban and rural community members to produce, prepare and preserve, deliver and store the food they need daily and prepare for emergencies. It incorporates essential in situ research to capture, document, and share local ecological knowledge generated by food web members' experiences. The coordinated, decentralized system can facilitate an effective feedback loop between members of the food web system to ensure that operations proceed effectively and respond to conditions as they develop.

Supported by the economic infrastructure (public policy and funding) the food web's circular economy is designed to benefit the food web's employees and the region's communities.

Energy management for food-a practical necessity

By design and practice, the food web economy is an energy management system for food (energy) providing an effective tool to prevent food waste and the greenhouse gas emissions it generates while normalizing daily access to sustainably sourced foods. With established markets, storage sites and community kitchens staffed to prepare and preserve throughout the year, every part of the system can plan and respond to abundant harvests effectively. That capacity to plan and deliver also serves the needs of valued programs such as Farm to School and Farm to Early Childhood Care.

Research to guide economic development

[This important study](#) conducted in northeastern Minnesota confirms the value of providing economic infrastructure to create and operate a robust, locally adapted food economy as a keystone for resilient regional economies.

The findings of the study reveal the current number of farms located in the identified region, the amount and types of food produced and purchased within that region. Those purchases include significant amounts of preserved and packaged foods which are not sourced or processed locally. This is important insofar as it acknowledges the need for access to prepared foods to meet daily needs. The demand for prepared foods is extensive. It includes childcare sites and schools, neighborhoods, hospitals, businesses, eldercare, and senior residences. Given the demand for access to prepared foods, regional food systems would need to expand the capacity of producers and establish an effective system to employ local community members to prepare, preserve, and deliver the food generated in the region.

The study concludes that with the right investments and public policies (economic infrastructure) to support generating the capacity of current and additional producers, the region could produce food to feed the population of the region.

Defining the path forward

As Minnesota's communities make investments to normalize resilient, enduring economic climate solutions, the experiences of the community-based local food leadership initiatives offer vital insights. Especially significant are the youth programs that offer a learning environment designed to nurture leadership and life skills while growing, preparing, and preserving culturally relevant food. In those environments, youth gain essential skills, but equally important they forge connections to one another and their communities. As our communities face the immense challenges of climate, investing in economies designed to cultivate and nurture connection and common purpose is crucial. The food web economy offers an environment designed to pursue common purpose together as stewards of the home we share. This is a role that no one else can play and it is only possible with an economy designed to support it. Embracing that role is a practical necessity that will have lasting impacts on the health and well-being of our communities.

Pastor Tope Dosumu
Executive Director
LifeGate Services
lifegateservices@gmail.com

HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

Dear Chair Hassan, Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee, and Representative Sencer-Mura,

As a leader in the emerging local food economy, I am writing to thank you for championing [HF2881/ SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c) organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food avoiding 108 metric tons of greenhouse gases. They are redirecting foods to communities that have low/no access to fresh healthy, and culturally appropriate that are regionally sourced.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#). SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their Equity Eats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our Indigenous, BIPOC, and poor rural communities.

Our common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies. Crucially, [HF2881/ SF2940](#) recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

As communities make plans to live sustainably and manage the challenges of unpredictable weather conditions, the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy cannot be overstated. Operating a robust locally adapted food economy is a keystone to the region's economic stability and the well-being of our rural, urban, and suburban communities.

Thank you for your leadership.





THE GOOD ACRE
FOOD + COMMUNITY

March 11, 2023

Dear Chair Hassan and members of the Committee,

As a representative of The Good Acre, the largest food hub in Minnesota, it is our mission to unlock economic opportunity for farmers in our region through personalized support and market development. I urge this committee to extend its support for HF2881/SF2940 and the transformative vision it offers for our state's food economy.

The regenerative food web outlined in HF2881/SF2940 is a visionary approach to addressing enduring challenges of accessing food, clean water, and addressing climate change in a sustainable manner. By providing financial and technical assistance for urban and rural producers engaged in organic, regenerative food systems, and investing in physical and operational infrastructure, this legislation fosters the growth of a vibrant and inclusive food economy.

Furthermore, the establishment of the Headwaters Community Food and Water Economic Resiliency Program, as outlined in the bill text, reflects a comprehensive and collaborative approach to advancing food security and economic opportunity in our state. By convening a diverse Advisory Committee and allocating appropriations to support program implementation, HF2881/SF2940 demonstrates a commitment to inclusive governance and effective resource allocation.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HF2881/SF2940 and the establishment of the Headwaters Community Food and Water Economic Resiliency Program. By aligning public policy and funding with the needs of local initiatives, bill has the potential to revolutionize our food landscape, ensuring equitable access to healthy foods for all Minnesotans.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Nikki Warner
Director of Communications & Government Affairs
nikki@thegoodacre.org



HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

LesleaHodgson, Root Prairie Galloways LLC

Licensed Minnesota retail food handler, Minnesota Dept of Ag certified water quality farmer, Grassfed healthy beef & poultry producer
hodgsonranch@aol.com

Dear Chair Hassan, Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee, and Representative Sencer-Mura,

As a leader in the emerging local food economy, I am writing to thank you for championing [HF2881/ SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c) organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food. They are redirecting foods to communities that have low/no access to fresh healthy, and culturally appropriate foods that are regionally sourced.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#). SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their Equity Eats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our Indigenous, BIPOC, and rural communities of historically low resources.

Our common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies. Crucially, [HF2881/ SF2940](#) recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

As communities make plans to live sustainably and manage the challenges of unpredictable weather conditions, the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy cannot be overstated. Operating a robust locally adapted food economy is a keystone to the region's economic stability and the well-being of our rural agricultural, urban, and suburban communities.

A message to Lisa: Thank you Lisa Schutz, for your leadership of SEMNFRR, your tirelessness working with the state and your purchase of protein from our farm to deliver to our local

community. This action is vital to us as you climb over the barriers that have been set in place. You are directly supporting our farming economy and our stewarding of this land for this period in historical time. We don't know yet whose land this was originally but if things really do go full circle we want to care for this land and it's wildlife and creatures while we are on it with future generations in mind..

Stewarding the land in manner that preserves and rebuilds for the future use to grow foods and habitat absolutely costs more than row cropping and needs to be recognized by our state, if in no other way but to financially support and enable the distribution of our farm's products to local eaters who would not ordinarily be able to purchase our high quality protein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslea Hodgson', written in a cursive style.

Leslea Hodgson



March 13, 2024

Chair Hassan and Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives Economic Development, Finance and Policy Committee:

I am writing in support of HF2881- the Headwaters Community Food and Water Act. I am writing to you as CEO of Solar Bear LLC, a developer of renewable energy projects with a primary focus on projects in the Indigenous community. For example, Solar Bear is currently working with a Native lead and staffed organization engaged in regenerative farming, Dream of Wild Health.

My understanding of this bill is that it would provide resources for the growth of a Dream of Wild Health emerging Native farmers incubator. In this regard, Solar Bear is discussing ways to integrate solar energy into this possible program expansion as an alignment of indigenous food ways and clean energy.

The provisions of this bill would provide for jobs that by credible calculations of direct/indirect/induced jobs per \$1M invested are nearly comparable to job numbers created per \$1M investments in infrastructure/construction. These jobs may also meet the 40% threshold for environmental justice benefit required for the Minnesota Climate Innovation Finance Authority and related Federal Climate Action funding. Environmental justice funding flowing from this legislation could have a multiplier impact on investment and jobs job creation in Minnesota.

Supplementary background: [jobs-renewal-agriculture.pdf \(sierraclub.org\)](https://sierraclub.org/jobs-renewal-agriculture.pdf)

Thanks for your consideration and feel free to contact me to discuss this legislation.

Robert Blake
Founder, CEO
Solar Bear

"Accelerating Turtle Island's Transition to a Renewable Energy Future"

Address: 817 5th Avenue South, Suite 400, Minneapolis, MN 55404

Email: robert@solarbear.earth Website: www.solarbear.earth

HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

Evangeline Moen
Depot Studios
Isle, MN 56342
depotstudios@frontiernet.net

Dear Chair Hassan, Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee, and Representative Sencer-Mura,

As a decades long advocate of local food economies, I am writing to thank you for championing HF2881/ SF2940 and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c)3 organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food avoiding 108 metric tons of greenhouse gases. They are redirecting foods to communities that have low/no access to fresh healthy, and culturally appropriate that are regionally sourced.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in HF2881/ SF2940. SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their Equity Eats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our Indigenous, BIPOC, and poor rural communities.

Our common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies. Crucially, HF2881/ SF2940 recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role.

Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

As communities make plans to live sustainably and manage the challenges of unpredictable weather conditions, the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy cannot be overstated. Operating a robust locally adapted food economy is a keystone to the region's economic stability and the well-being of our rural, urban, and suburban communities.

Thank you for your leadership.

Evangeline Moen

Although Southern Minnesota is home to renowned global food companies, the region has poverty rates that are more than double the US rate. and food insecurity rates that are more than double the rate in the United States community groups to end hunger in Mower County where one in ten adults and one in seven children are food insecure.

[Poverty rates in Mower County are 12.7% overall and 19.8% for children. Mower County ranks 69th of 87 counties for health factors and 64th of 87 for health outcomes according to Minnesota Compass](#)

[Poverty rates in Mower County are 12.7% overall and 19.8% for children. Mower County ranks 69th of 87 counties for health factors and 64th of 87 for health outcomes according to Minnesota Compass](#)

Prairie Island Indian Community

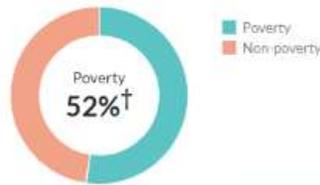
Poverty

27.4%

Persons below poverty line

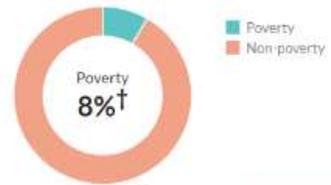
more than double the rate in United States: 12.6%

Children (Under 18)



Show data / Embed

Seniors (65 and over)



Show data / Embed

Austin, MN

Poverty

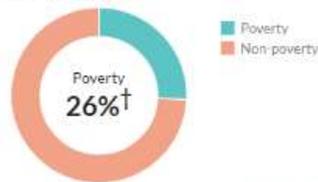
15.6%

Persons below poverty line

about 25 percent higher than the rate in the Austin, MN Micro Area: 12.7%[†]

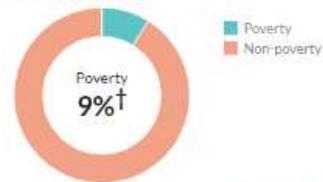
more than 1.5 times the rate in Minnesota: 9.2%

Children (Under 18)



Show data / Embed

Seniors (65 and over)



Show data / Embed

Prairie Island Indian Community

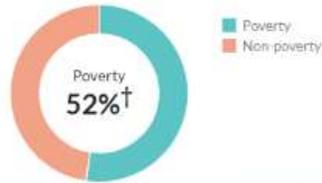
Poverty

27.4%

Persons below poverty line

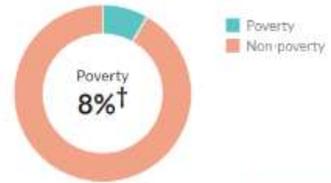
more than double the rate in United States: 12.6%

Children (Under 18)



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

Seniors (65 and over)



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

Austin, MN

Poverty

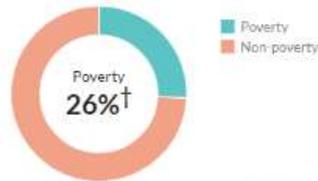
15.6%

Persons below poverty line

about 25 percent higher than the rate in the Austin, MN Micro Area: 12.7%†

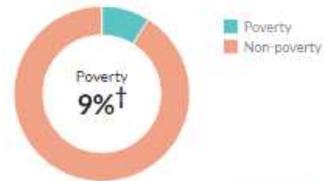
more than 1.5 times the rate in Minnesota: 9.2%

Children (Under 18)



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

Seniors (65 and over)



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

Southeast Minnesota Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) Legislative Proposal 2024

SEMNFRR is requesting capital funding to acquire, renovate, and establish a centrally located facility in southern MN with a business management structure designed to facilitate the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and marketing of locally/regionally produced foods. We have established meaningful reciprocal partnerships with a network of over one hundred food producers and have many more in need of our services.

The Equity Eats Hub will connect emerging BIPOC and otherwise marginalized (i.e. female, LGBTQ) food producers and community members with a host of complementary services year-round including:

- Coordination of supply chain logistics and market access (distribution, processing, and delivery)
- Wholesale aggregate distribution and drop-off site
- Retail point-of-sale (POS)
- Onsite USDA-approved commercial kitchen for product development and training
- Business management assistance to participate effectively in the emerging local food economy (ELFE)
- Center for reviving indigenous foodways and research
- Expand education for youth about the care of their ecosystem, community care programs, and their local food system

Together, the coordinated set of services will enable members (i.e. BIPOC, emerging farmers, and food processors) of the emerging local food economy to meet the demand for affordable, locally produced, healthy, and culturally relevant foods (i.e. foods that are recognized, trusted, palatable, and consumed) in the communities we serve. The hub's wholesale distribution program can connect food producers to learning institutions including the popular Farm-to-School and Farm-to-Early Care programs, satellite food pantries, senior and disabled persons service centers, and rural healthcare facilities.

Operating at the center of the area's food economy, the Equity Eats Food Hub will provide essential services to normalize food security while preventing food waste. By managing every element of the food web economy from source to table, food producers can plan well, and depend on markets created to meet community needs and prevent waste.

With continued concerns about supply chain disruption and the impacts of unpredictable weather, generating capacity to deliver vital food sources daily and as part of a robust response to emergencies is a keystone to our regional resilience. The Equity Eats Hub will play a vital role in the economic landscape of Minnesota.

We are Indigenous-led sharing meaningful, reciprocal relationships with Native American communities across the expanse of Turtle Island. The project's founder and

director is a recognized leader in the development of sustainable food systems designed to prevent food waste and normalize food security in Minnesota's marginalized communities particularly indigenous populations.

We are connected to the White Earth Nation community members, Red Lake Nation community members, and Dakota youth and families residing in and around tribal lands in Mille Lacs, as well as the Ojibwa, and Dakota peoples in and adjacent to Prairie Island Indian Community, and residents of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

Members of these communities often are disenfranchised and disconnected from their Tribal Governments and face limited access to the food and nutrition most aligned with their cultures and heritage. There is a direct connection between the dismantling of tribal communities and cultures and the enduring economic and food apartheid and health challenges facing indigenous community members.

In response to these conditions in recent years, indigenous leaders have worked within their communities and in partnership with other nations to revive indigenous foodways (foods, seeds, skills and practices, and knowledge and ecosystem care).

Responsive Leadership for a Sustainable Future

The proposed Equity Eats Hub will provide an environment designed to support indigenous foodways across communities and generations. In addition to providing essential economic opportunity, the center will conduct research to document, and understand every aspect of the food economy as it relates to our partner communities including the challenges created by food apartheid and the implications for health, equity, and the promise of reviving indigenous food systems and ecosystem care in response to the climate crisis.

In keeping with our heritage, our research will use a combination of indigenous-informed data collection and participatory research (e.g., using storytelling, learning, and healing circles in addition to quantitative surveys as appropriate). Our research project will fill a gap in the research about food producers at Minnesota's Bank of Research. In the 2022 and 2023 reports from the statewide cooperative partnership for regional and local markets, indigenous food producers operating in the food-producing economy are absent from the Beyond the Agricultural Census statewide report. Our findings will reveal the role played by indigenous food producers in the state's economy and help our partners forge stronger ties to work together toward a sustainable future.

Lisa Schutz, Founder and Director, SEMNFRR mnfoodrescue.org
mnfoodrescue@gmail.com

Marita Bujold, Project Design Development, info@justfoodandwater.org

Letter in support of [HF2881/ SF2940](#)
Michael Chaney, Project Sweetie Pie

Chair Hassan and members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee

The burgeoning urban farm movement has seen an amazing uptick in not only an exponential increase in local food production by new and emerging farmers of color, but an equally amazing increase in governmental agency and philanthropic investments. I/PSP is proud to be one of those food pioneers who have been delivering the goods for more than a decade.

In fact Project Sweetie Pie has become the pied piper and the Johnny Appleseed of Urban farming in north Minneapolis and beyond and helped expedite the local food movement as the author/engineer of the Minnesota Department Of Ag/Aggri grant. That legislation gave official birth in the state to the term "urban farming."

We are witnessing in real time the changing face of agriculture as BIPOC farmers forge new pathways into the future of farming. This comprehensive and thoughtful legislative policy [HF2881/ SF2940](#) brilliantly creates the blueprint for an even brighter, sustainable and equitable food focused future.

I urge you to support the passing of this bill in fueling equity and inclusion for all as we harvest solutions that will feed us all!

Let it reign/Let it reign/Let it reign.

Michael Chaney/Project Sweetie Pie 763-227-4881
We're planting the seeds of change



HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

Okechukwu Ukaga, Dean, Division of Food and Agriculture,
Riverland Community College, Albert Lea, Austin, Owatonna
okechukwu.ukaga@riverland.edu

Dear Chair Hassan, Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee, and Representative Sencer-Mura,

As a leader in agriculture and local food economy, I am writing to thank you for championing [HF2881/SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy. I have, over the past 25 years, been involved in helping develop projects that support local food systems throughout the state. Over the past year, as academic dean at Riverland, I have had the opportunity to experience and appreciate partnership with SEMNFRR to mitigate food insecurity for our students and their families, while rescuing food that would otherwise be wasted. I am therefore very supportive of SEMNFRR and look forward to continued collaboration with Director Lisa Schutz.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c) organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. Riverland is partnering with SEMNFRR on the MDA Local Food Purchasing Assistance grant. We have been impressed with the work SEMNFRR is doing in SE Minnesota. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food avoiding 108 metric tons of greenhouse gases. They are redirecting food to Riverland Community College Food Pantries and to other entities that have low/no access to fresh healthy, and culturally appropriate food that is sourced in our region.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/SF2940](#). SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their Equity Eats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all our Indigenous, BIPOC, and poor rural communities. According to the Mower County Food Security Project Mower County's

percentage of people who are food insecure is higher at 7.1% than the state average of 6.8% and the food insecure child rate in Mower County is 10.9% compared to the state rate of 9.2%

We share a common purpose of normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies. Crucially, [HF2881/SF2940](#) recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

Climate change, economic disparities, and the need for sustainable, healthy food increases the urgency for Minnesota to respond with solutions. I am grateful that our legislators understand the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy. Riverland Community College is embarking on a journey to create a world-class agriculture and food research center in Mower County in partnership with the University of Minnesota. I am looking forward to exploring additional collaborations with SEMNFRR to serve the region.

Thank you for your leadership and focus on food equity.

Okey Ukaga

Okechukwu Ukaga, PhD
Dean, Division of Food and Agriculture
Riverland Community College
1900 8th Avenue N.W.
Austin, MN 55912

HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

Ruth Arhelger

Southeast Minnesota Food Rescue and Redistribution

ruth@kevarh.com

Dear Chair Hassan, Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee, and Representative Sencer-Mura,

I am writing to thank you for championing [HF2881/ SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c) organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food avoiding 108 metric tons of greenhouse gasses. They are redirecting foods to communities that have low/no access to fresh healthy, and culturally appropriate that are regionally sourced.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#). SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their Equity Eats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our Indigenous, BIPOC, and poor rural communities.

Our common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies. Crucially, [HF2881/ SF2940](#) recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

As communities make plans to live sustainably and manage the challenges of unpredictable weather conditions, the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy cannot be overstated. Operating a robust locally adapted food economy is a keystone to the region's economic stability and the well-being of our rural, urban, and suburban communities.

Thank you for your leadership.

Ruth Arhelger



HF2881/SF2940 Southeast MN Food Rescue and Redistribution: Letter of Support

Danielle Heiny, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Riverland Community College, Albert Lea, Austin, Owatonna
dani.heiny@riverland.edu

Dear Chair Hassan, Members of the Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee, and Representative Sencer-Mura,

As a leader in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the emerging local food economy, I am writing to thank you for championing [HF2881/ SF2940](#) and the comprehensive economic infrastructure it offers to establish and operate a just, sustainable, and responsive food economy. I oversee the food pantries at our Riverland Community College campuses in Austin, Albert Lea, and Owatonna. Every day I see first-hand the needs of hungry students who do not have enough food to get through the week. Our partnership with SEMNFRR is bringing much needed food to our food pantries for our students. SEMNFRR is creating positive change for Riverland and our service area. SEMNFRR has been a strong partner in Riverland's work to mitigate food insecurity for our students and their families. We look forward to working with SEMNFRR and Director Lisa Schutz on the Equity Eats food systems project and being part of the needed change to meet the region's need for healthy, local, culturally relevant food at affordable prices.

During the 2022-2023 legislative session, elected leaders heard compelling testimony in support of the emerging local food economy. SE MN Food Rescue and Redistribution (SEMNFRR) is a 501(c) organization that is operating at the center of the local and regional food economy. Riverland is partnering with SEMNFRR on the MDA Local Food Purchasing Assistance grant. We have been impressed with the work SEMNFRR is doing in SE Minnesota. They provide essential services to dual populations that prevent food waste, increase MN food producers' economy, and normalize food security in communities. SEMNFRR has rescued and redirected 72,000 pounds of food avoiding 108 metric tons of greenhouse gases. They are redirecting food to Riverland Community College Food Pantries and to other entities that have low/no access to fresh healthy, and culturally appropriate food that is sourced in our region.

SEMNFRR programming is by design aligned with the decentralized, coordinated source-to-table food web economy outlined in [HF2881/ SF2940](#). SEMNFRR provides the vital economic infrastructure identified by their Equity Eats bonding proposal, to support local food system operations, and provides a system to generate the state's capacity to normalize food and water security in all of our Indigenous, BIPOC, and poor rural communities. Riverland's BIPOC students comprise 26%. According to the Mower County Food Security Project Mower County's percentage of people who are food insecure is

higher at 7.1% than the state average of 6.8% and the food insecure child rate in Mower County is 10.9% compared to the state rate of 9.2%

Our common purpose: normalizing access to healthy, culturally relevant locally and regionally sourced foods. Our shared experiences operating in the local food landscape identify a set of needs that could be met with public policy defined to support our operations and public funding to back those policies. Crucially, [HF2881/ SF2940](#) recognizes the role of Indigenous and BIPOC leadership in the local food economy and the necessity of supporting that role. Additionally, the food web economy aligns with the Health Department's Climate and Health Equity Goals.

Climate change, economic disparities, and the need for sustainable, healthy food increases the urgency for Minnesota to respond with solutions. I am grateful that our legislators understand the value and relevance of creating a responsive, just, and sustainable locally adapted food economy. Riverland Community College is embarking on a journey to create a world-class agriculture and food research center in Mower County in partnership with the University of Minnesota. The work of SEMNFRR and Equity Eats brings opportunities to explore the connections of resilient food systems to the health and well-being of our rural, urban, and suburban communities. Riverland is looking forward to exploring additional collaborations with SEMNFRR and their goals of creating a local food hub to build capacity to serve the region.

Thank you for your leadership and focus on food equity.

Danielle Heiny

Danielle Heiny

Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Riverland Community College

1900 8th Avenue N.W.
Austin, MN 55912