



305 Roselawn Ave E | Suite 200 | St. Paul, MN 55117
Phone: (651) 639-1223 | www.mfu.org

February 27, 2026

Co-Chair Paul Anderson
Co-Chair Rick Hansen
House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard., Room G3
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: MFU support for Depredation Account Funding (HF3580)

Dear Co-Chair Hansen, Co-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share our support for Representative Burkel's bill to ensure adequate funding for the wolf and elk depredation account at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) (HF3580).

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities since 1918. For many of our members, adequately funding these accounts is a high priority, because they have lost livestock or crops to wolf and elk. In the case of lost livestock, this takes a significant financial toll, particularly given that beef prices are one bright spot in an otherwise bleak agricultural economy. For the many small livestock producers who pasture in the northern part of the state, the death of even one animal is a significant loss.

It is also worth noting that our members' experience is that the process for verifying claims is extensive and often inconclusive. So depredations are likely higher than what is reflected in the claims already overburdening the fund.

I appreciate your consideration and hope this program continues to benefit from your support. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for your work on behalf of farmers and all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union