



MFMA Supports H.F. 1981 – the Good Food Access Fund program

Chair Vang, and Members of the MN House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee,

Minnesota Farmers' Market Association works to build a strong local foodshed in Minnesota because our state is much more resilient when communities are equipped to produce food and sustain themselves. MFMA stands in support of H.F. 1981, granting money to the Good Food Access Fund program.

MFMA supports all farmers' markets in Minnesota, wherever they are. We are at a record-high 362 farmers' markets, with more onboarding this year. We do the research and curriculum development, offering trainings on food safety, MN food laws and licensing, cottage foods, sales tax on foods, business plans, etc. This winter, we have 32 zoominars scheduled, during the day, evenings, weekends – making the training as accessible as possible. We've offered a handful with interpretation into various languages – and need to offer more. MFMA is working with the Metro Food Justice Network to bring farm financial trainings to urban farmers, as part of our Farm Financial Resources Collaboration.

The need for public investment in Minnesota's local foodshed is great. Dollars spent at the community level for community commercial kitchens, community food hubs (including farmers' market food hubs), community cold storage, community cold transport have a huge ROI for Minnesotans. COVID confirmed the fragility of long food supply chains and the resiliency of short food supply chains. The monies in the Good Food Access Fund benefit *communities* and their ability to feed their people.

There are many local foodshed initiatives in front of your committee this year that need to get funded – we'll encourage Leadership to set a high budget target for Agriculture so these critical initiatives can get funded during this year's historic budget surplus.

Sincerely,

Kathy Zeman
Executive Director
Minnesota Farmers' Market Association

MISSION

MFMA provides services, programs, and leadership that support and promote farmers' markets across Minnesota.