



April 7, 2021

Dear Members of the Committee,

The Minnesota Soybean Growers Association (MSGA) is a nonpartisan advocacy group that represents the interests of our state's nearly 28,000 soybean farmers, and is the first state affiliate of the American Soybean Association.

MSGA wishes to express our support and appreciation for several different funding recommendations contained in the omnibus bill including investment in: Northern Crops Institute, noxious weed program, mental health outreach, farm safety grants and biofuels infrastructure.

However, MSGA does oppose language in HF1524 that proposes to add additional labeling requirements to treated seed, and the proposed increase fees on agriculture related pesticides from .55% to .9%. We would also oppose any amendments to the bill that propose to restrict the use of these necessary tools. Pesticides are a necessary part of modern agricultural practices. In fact, many of the gains in agriculture are due to keeping pests at bay with pesticides. Without pesticides, pests that have no natural predators would be allowed to destroy crops and other property that the modern world depends on. Farmers use pesticides judiciously and only when their crops are threatened by pests.

Modern agriculture innovations and practices are vital to the production of healthy, high-quality and abundant food and fiber grown in a safe, sustainable way that conserves precious resources. Crop protection products are a key component of modern agriculture. Because of advancements made possible through extensive scientific research, development and testing, crop protection products have very precise, targeted applications that produce higher-yielding, healthy crops on less land. It is inevitable that pathogens and pests will infect or attack crops and that weeds compete with crops for water and nutrients, thereby reducing yields. Plants will not produce reliable yields of high quality unless they are kept healthy. In all of this, crop protection products play a significant role.

There is no singular, one-size-fits-all approach to crop protection. Farmers today have a diverse toolbox at their disposal to minimize damage from pests, including state-of-the-art chemical and biological products, advanced data analytics and precision technologies. While these tools are individually powerful, combining them in an agronomic approach tailored to farmers' specific challenges enhances their effectiveness while minimizing the environmental impact of agriculture.

For these reasons, MSGA opposes legislative efforts that require additional labeling requirements of seed, increase fees on important tools in the management of agriculture related pests, and restrict the use of agriculture technology. These provisions would increase the cost of these products, ultimately increase the cost to farmers on already expensive agriculture inputs and put our farmers at a competitive disadvantage.

MSGA also stands in opposition to unnecessary "climate smart" legislation. The number of programs and goals in existence on soil sequestration of carbon already makes this arena confusing. The State of Minnesota does not need to jump on the bandwagon with yet another program.

We thank you for your time and appreciate the opportunity to submit our input.

Sincerely,

Jamie Beyer, President, Minnesota Soybean Growers Association