

Feb. 27, 2023

Dear Chair Vang, Vice-Chair Pursell, and Members of the Committee

I am writing to request your support for Representative Sencer-Mura's bill HF 1744 which includes funding for The Good Acre's LEAFF program. This proven program is mutually beneficial to the well-being of our communities and to the wonderful emerging farmers whose skills and labors supply vital food sources.

By investing in the LEAFF program, the fresh produce grown by emerging farmers will be delivered to local food shelves to help meet the demand for fresh, locally produced and culturally relevant foods. Access to these food sources addresses the enduring food insecurity experienced particularly by communities of color and community members with income inadequate to meet essential needs.

The investment in LEAFF provides a key part of the economic infrastructure necessary to support the operations of a robust local food economy. By providing a market, emerging farmers can plan their production effectively by planting their fields to deliver produce throughout the growing season and for processing and storage as well. That market certainty strengthens the local food system's operations which in turn supports the demand for farm-to-school and farm-to-childcare programs. With continuing concerns about supply chain issues and unpredictable weather events, generating local capacity to deliver vital food sources is a keystone to our regional resilience.

Please support HF 1744 as an investment to strengthen our communities' capacity to support emerging farmers and meet demands for healthy food sources now and in the future.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,
Marita Bujold
Founder, Just Food and Water (Initiative)
info@justfoodandwater.org
325 Pelham Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55104