

Chair Torrey Westrom
Agriculture and Broadband Finance Conference Committee
95 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Mike Sundin
Agriculture and Broadband Finance Conference Committee
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Westrom, Chair Sundin and members of the conference committee:

We are the members of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Emerging Farmers' Working Group. We represent diverse communities including veteran farmers, beginning farmers, women farmers, immigrant farmers, Indigenous farmers, and farmers of color. We urge you to support the funding for the Emerging Farmers Working Group (**House 7.20**) and the coordinator position for Emerging Farmers (**House 7.24**) within MDA. By supporting these pieces of legislation, you will be reflecting to our communities that we have a place in Minnesota's agricultural sector, and that you, our representatives, value our contributions and wish to support our growth and inclusion in what is a vibrant part of our state's culture, heritage, and economy.

The Emerging Farmers' Working Group came from a legislative request for the MDA to study the current situation of emerging farmers across the state. After a series of listening sessions, a [legislative report](#) was prepared and presented to your respective committees. The foremost recommendation was to establish an Emerging Farmers' Working Group which would advise and guide the MDA and the Legislature on issues related to emerging farmers, including land access, market development, and training and mentorship. The working group was launched in the Fall of 2020 and we, the

inaugural members, are proud to represent our communities and support **House 7.20** and **House 7.24** which continue this initiative by supporting staffing and funding for emerging farmers within the MDA.

We thank all of you for your support of Minnesota farmers and your service on this committee. We believe that Minnesota's agriculture is made stronger by its diversity. We look forward to working together to support that goal.

Sincerely,

Hannah Bernhardt, Medicine Creek Farm

Elizabeth Bryant

Naima Dhore, Somali American Farmers Association

Jessika Greendeer, Dream of Wild Health

Janssen Hang, Hmong American Farmers Association

Denise King

Lucas Kruse

Moses Momanyi, Kilimo Minnesota

Hindolo Pokawa, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective

Emily Reno

Sai Thao

Michael Walgrave, 1st Rock Farm and Consulting

Kaitlyn Walsh

Shelly Woods, Farmer Veteran Coalition