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Representative Samantha Vang
545 State Office Building
House Agriculture Policy & Finance Committee
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 16, 2023

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

As the Committee reviews the Governor's budget recommendations in HF2679 for the Department of Agriculture, we write to share our support for proposed investments in programs that will benefit people and nature and will support communities across the state.

We especially want to share our support for the inclusion of soil health equipment grants via the Soil Health Financial Assistance pilot program. This program provides financial assistance not just limited to traditional cost-share and could include down payments on equipment, purchases or subscription of equipment, low interest loans, and purchases of seed, and technical assistance for conservation plans. This financial assistance will lower the risk to soil health adoption and help farmers overcome barriers to implementing practices across the state.

While we appreciate the \$4,000,000 proposed investment in the program contained in the Governor's budget request, greater investment will be needed to make significant gains towards statewide adoption of these practices and meet needs on Minnesota's farmlands. We encourage the committee to invest at least \$10,000,000 one-time and an ongoing investment of \$2,000,000 as included in HF1316, authored by Vice Chair Pursell, which has been previously considered by the committee.

Research shows we have a high potential to increase carbon storage through natural lands, including crop lands, in Minnesota. Soil health practices will help store carbon while providing benefits for water quality and quantity. There is an urgent need for these activities to expand to a meaningful scale, while require farm operations of all types and sizes to have support to implement and expand soil health practice adoption.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
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