

March 24, 2026

Co-Chair Rick Hansen
Co-Chair Paul Anderson
House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard., Room G3
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Agriculture Support for Farmer-Lender Mediation

Dear Co-Chair Hansen, Co-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee:

We write to share our support for extending and providing additional support for Minnesota's Farmer-Lender Mediation (FLM) program. We believe a clean, five-year reauthorization of the program will provide certainty for program staff, lenders, and farmers who rely on the program.

Farmers manage significant uncertainty—markets, the weather, and the cost of inputs are all well-beyond their control. And at present, many are facing financial challenges. As evidence of this, there were nearly 700 new requests for mediation in the first four months of this fiscal year, up from 524 in 2025 and more than double the requests in 2024.

Acting now to extend the FLM program is one way state lawmakers can take to provide certainty. Furthermore, additional support for the program would help staff manage the increase in requests for mediation and continue to streamline the program.

We support Farmer-Lender Mediation and are grateful for your work to see it continue going forward. We hope this extension earns your support.

Sincerely,

Minnesota Farmers Union
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
Land Stewardship Project
Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers
Minnesota Milk Producers Association
Minnesota Soybean Growers Association
Minnesota State Cattleman's Association
Minnesota Turkey Growers Association
The Cooperative Network



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75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard., Room G3
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: MFU support for Extending Farmer-Lender Mediation (HF3692)

Dear Co-Chair Hansen, Co-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share our strongest support for extending Minnesota's Farmer-Lender Mediation program. From depressed grain prices to spiking fertilizer costs, many farmers are facing compounding economic challenges heading into the next growing season. Extending this program would be a no-cost way to provide some certainty for this program and the farm families who find themselves in need of it.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities since 1918. Our organization has long-championed Minnesota's Farmer-Lender Mediation program, because it has a proven track record of helping farmers in economic crisis. Our communities are better for the diverse, distributed, family-owned farms operating across the state. And as highlighted in testimony, this program helps farms manage debt and—in many cases—continue going forward. Put simply, it saves farms.

It's also important to note that—despite the fiscal note—extending the program does not require additional state investment. Instead, and as clarified by the University of Minnesota (UMN) in testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, the cost is already included in the base appropriation for UMN Extension.

We appreciate Rep. Smith's work on this reauthorization and hope it earns your full support. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for considering the needs and perspectives of Minnesota's farm families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union