

March 17, 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: Support for Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Funding Increase (SF3864)

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

We write to express our strong support for Rep. Lee's bill to increase state funding for the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program (HF3693). Organizations statewide continue to rely on this program to establish wholesale agreements with farmers, providing a stable market for new and emerging farmers who are building their businesses.

Farmers in Minnesota already navigate a range of unpredictable challenges—from weather events and fluctuating input costs, disease pressures, and volatile markets. In 2025, after the federal government cut over \$3 million for the LFPA program, the Minnesota legislature led in standing up a first state-funded initiative.

That said—and due to budget constraints—the state program is much smaller, funded at \$700,000 a year through the biennium. The funding proposed in this legislation would bring the state appropriation closer to what was cut while also helping to meet the significant demand. In 2024, applicants to LFPA requested nearly \$5 million.

For many beginning and underserved producers, market development opportunities have historically been out of reach. LFPA partnerships help fill that gap, providing a much-needed source of financial stability during the high-risk early years of farming.

In addition to supporting farmers, the program improves access to fresh, healthy foods for underserved communities across Minnesota. We urge you to prioritize this important program and ensure that Minnesota's farmers continue to receive the support they need.

Thank you for your consideration,

Climate Land Leaders
Feeding Frogtown
Land Stewardship Project (LSP)
Minnesota Farmers' Market Association
Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU)
Red Wing Farmers Markets
Renewing the Countryside (RTC)

Sprout Food Hub
Sustainable Farming Association (SFA)
The Food Group
The Good Acre
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
The Village Agricultural Cooperative

March 17, 2026

Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
P.O. Box 4233
Saint Paul, MN 55104

Dear Chairs Hansen and Anderson, and Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee members,

I am writing on behalf of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition in support of HF3693 (Lee), which would allocate additional funding to Minnesota's Local Food Purchase Assistance Program (LFPA). The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC) is a state-wide coalition formed through the partnership of our three sponsoring faith organizations: the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, and the Minnesota Council of Churches. As people of faith, we advocate alongside our neighbors of differing religious backgrounds to address poverty, uphold the dignity of overlooked communities, and mitigate societal harm. This session, our organization is prioritizing funding for the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program in our legislative platform to address food security for our neighbors in need. We enthusiastically support the passage of HF3693, which would increase this funding by an additional \$500,000 per year, and thank Rep. Lee for agreeing to introduce this bill.

Food shelves, soup kitchens, and similar service providers are often managed by faith-affiliated organizations, particularly in rural Minnesota. These nonprofits are constantly looking for ways to provide nutritious food options to underserved communities. Federal changes to SNAP funding and requirements mean that increasingly, many of our neighbors will have to find different ways to feed their children and themselves. The passage of Minnesota's LFPA program last session was an essential step toward meeting this growing need and included parameters that make it better suited to serve our rural communities than the previous federal LFPA program. We support increasing funding to this program through HF3693 to help replace the \$4 million in federal dollars that were cancelled in 2025. Vulnerable families in Minnesota need this support more than any other time in recent memory.

We urge you to vote in favor of increased LFPA funding. By supporting this program, you will help faith organizations and other nonprofits continue providing Minnesotans with essential lifelines to feed their families. Your support will help sustain these vital services in our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HF3693.

Sincerely,



Leah Patton
Executive Director, Joint Religious Legislative Coalition