

April 12, 2021

Representative Rick Hansen
407 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Hansen:

On behalf of the Minnesota AgriGrowth Council (AgriGrowth), we are writing to thank you for chief authoring House File 1338. This legislation would appropriate \$250,000 in fiscal year 2022 that would be appropriated from the general fund to the Minnesota Historical Society for a grant to Farmamerica for site improvements including classroom upgrades, visitor center remodeling, and expanded agricultural literacy programming.

The Minnesota AgriGrowth Council (AgriGrowth) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan member organization representing the broad cross section of the agriculture and food systems industry, including agribusinesses, production agriculture, processors, food manufacturers, and numerous other entities throughout the food-supply chain.

AgriGrowth greatly appreciates the unique role Farmamerica provides in promoting and celebrating the evolving story of agriculture. When Farmamerica was created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1978, its goal was to connect people with agriculture through sensory experiences, historic farm tours, interactive activities, educational programs such as field trips and farm camps, and family events. The target audience for Farmamerica visitors are third graders to adults within a 70+ mile radius of the facility who are not directly connected to agriculture.

Unfortunately, in this current day and age few Minnesotans feel connected to agriculture or understand its relevance in their lives. Farmamerica's current budget cannot accommodate its deferred maintenance and also develop experiences and exhibits to connect people to today's agriculture. These much-needed funds from House File 1338 would go towards Farmamerica's upgrade of their facilities that would assist in repairing historic buildings and farmland on the property. The funding would also assist in allowing Farmamerica to offer year-round educational programs and experiences that continue to highlight yesterday's agriculture and everyone's personal connection to how their food, fuel, and fiber is derived from the farm.

In closing, we would like to note that House File 1338's companion bill Senate File 2175, authored by Sen. Bill Weber, was recently included in the Senate File 1831, which is the Senate State Government Omnibus Finance bill. We are hopeful lawmakers will come together and agree to support this much needed legislation this session. We thank you in advance for your continued support of H.F. 1338.

Sincerely,



Tamara A. Nelsen
Executive Director