



**LAND  
STEWARDSHIP  
PROJECT**

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March 16, 2022

Chair Hansen and Members of the Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

On behalf of the Land Stewardship Project's 4,500 farmer, rural, urban, and suburban members, we urge you to include at least \$20 million for the Soil Health Cost-Share Program and establishing state-wide soil health goals in your budget this legislative session, with the first step being laying over HF 3302 for possible inclusion.

By reducing financial barriers for farmers, these monies would significantly scale up adoption soil- and resiliency-building practices, such as managed rotational grazing and perennial cropping, on the landscape. Additionally, by adopting state-wide soil health acreage goals, we will orient our state institutions toward making the transition to 100% continuous living cover a major priority and set Minnesota on a track to be a national leader. Numerous other states are already looking at this proposal as a model, such as Illinois and Michigan.

When we steward healthy soil, we are cultivating vibrant and resilient rural, urban, and suburban communities LSP and economies. We cultivate thriving and resilient land that soaks up rain and sequesters carbon in perennial vegetation and soil organic matter. We foster healthy ecosystems with clean water and a sustainable climate for microorganisms, pollinators, wildlife, and people. We ensure that our future generations will have the soil they need to grow nutritious food for their communities. We protect our infrastructure, homes, and farms from the impacts of extreme weather. We create a strong path to receive federal funds that can be channeled straight to Minnesota farmers.

With our historic budget surplus, you have the opportunity to deliver for farmers, landowners, and rural communities. The investments we make now will serve us well into the future. No matter where we live or what we look like, we depend on having a sustainable and just farm and food system. Yet, Minnesota's farmers are facing compounding challenges of extreme weather, financial crisis, and degrading topsoil. Now more than ever, we need public investment in farming that provides a public good.

On behalf of the Land Stewardship Project's Soil Health & Climate Steering Committee,

*Laura Schreiber*

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**THE GOOD ACRE**  
FOOD + COMMUNITY

March 16, 2022

Dear Chair Hansen, Vice-Chair Wazlawik, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Good Acre, a nonprofit food hub in Falcon Heights, I write to request your support for Rep. Lippert's Soil Health Cost Share Bill (HF 3302). Funding that lowers the barrier to implementing soil health building practices on farms will only help Minnesota farmers reap healthier harvests and be better stewards of the environment. Beyond agronomics, adopting soil health practices boosts soil productivity and, thus, profitability, adding more financial value to farmland. The economic value of soil health should not be overlooked nor should its ability to help farmers stay resilient in the face of a changing climate.

Please support HF 3302 so that the more Minnesota farmers can access funding that will allow them to adopt soil health building practices on their own farms.

Sincerely,  
Nikki Warner  
Communications Director  
[nikki@thegoodacre.org](mailto:nikki@thegoodacre.org)  
612-787-5969





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Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee  
Chair Representative Rick Hansen  
407 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hansen and Committee members,

March 16, 2022

Thank you for considering investments in soil health. Science tells us we can increase carbon storage through natural lands including croplands in the state. Soil health practices will help store carbon and mitigate the effects of climate change while providing benefits for water quality and quantity. There is an urgent need for these activities to expand to a meaningful scale, which will require farm operations of all types and sizes to have support to implement and expand soil health practice adoption.

We support the proposed investments in soil health represented in HF3302 and thank Representative Todd Lippert for elevating these important investments in cost-sharing practices. We also know that the current program as established by the legislature in 2021 appropriations will not be accessible to all types of operations or meet the needs and opportunities across Minnesota's farmlands where significant gains can be made.

Additionally, we know large-scale adoption of soil health practices will require participation by all types of farms and service providers. This is why we see the need for stakeholder participation to develop a comprehensive plan to expand soil health practices across the state for all types of farming operations. Such a process should also encourage and leverage private sector involvement and investments alongside state investments in soil health.

This bill is a continued step in the right direction, but without coordination among stakeholders we will fail to see the collaboration and shared public and private investments needed to secure significant carbon sequestration and other benefits across the state.

Thank you for your work and your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rich Biske".

Rich Biske  
Resilient Waters Director  
The Nature Conservancy



**CONSERVATION  
MINNESOTA**

March 16, 2022

**RE: HF 3302 (Lippert)**

**To:** Chair Hansen, Vice Chair Wazlawik, and Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

We write to you as members of Minnesota's conservation community to express our support for HF 3302 (Lippert). As an organization, Conservation Minnesota's mission is to protect the people and places that Minnesotans love, and advocating for the health of our communities, soil, water, and economy is vital to this achieving this goal.

Improving and utilizing soil health management systems increase drought resilience, capture and store water, and protect soil carbon and nutrients.<sup>1</sup> Soil health principles include minimizing disturbance, keeping living roots in the ground and the soil covered, and integrating livestock to prevent runoff and soil erosion. Soil erosion ultimately cuts into profits by removing topsoil from the land, and according to the USDA<sup>2</sup>, almost 1.7 billion tons of topsoil are washed or blown off land each year and results in the loss of billions of agriculture dollars. Protecting Minnesota's water quality is crucial, and with our 13 million acres of surface water, utilizing these farming practices can conserve water and reduce evaporation on fields by 80 percent.

Producers apply soil health principles in different ways, and this bill will offset some of the cost to maintain soil productivity for long-term profitability. This cost share program could improve conditions and health of soils by allowing farmers and ranchers to experiment with different practices, make decisions about cropping systems and water management for the particular needs of the land, and ultimately benefit their businesses and the agriculture economy.

We urge you to support HF 3302, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Keely Cervantes, Food & Agriculture Program Manager  
[keely@conservationminnesota.org](mailto:keely@conservationminnesota.org)

1. <https://blog-crop-news.extension.umn.edu/2022/02/soil-health-management-systems-what-are.html>

2. <https://www.conservationminnesota.org/news/climate-conversation>