

Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC



Carver, MN

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Date: March 14, 2023

To: Minnesota State House Members, Agricultural Policy & Finance Committee, Chair Vang, Vice Chair Pursell

RE: Support for HF 1747 (Pursell) Next Generation Farmer Development Program

Greetings Chair Vang and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my support of this bill. I farm and lease land to food farmers in Carver County. For the 2023 production season I entered into a partnership with Big River Farms to pilot a 'next phase' approach to their education and incubation of food farmers. This enables farmers with a few to several years of farming experience to take their next steps towards independence, the hope to eventually obtain their own land and operations. These are not generational producers with land that has been handed down, rather new farmers who wish to integrate themselves into their respective communities. Some were producers in their native countries, but are new Minnesotans that bring a rich and diverse mix to the good foods access we all enjoy. They are learning new systems for food production here.

This bill will help enable food producers in any community throughout Minnesota with a safety net that provides flexibility to better incorporate interns, share knowledge, and eventually incorporate employees for greater operational sustainability to ensure operations run efficiently. The fact that farms could re-apply more than once is helpful due to changes in production methods, crops, channels of sale, expansions, or contractions over time. Benefits come full circle with education and relationships gained from varied production models, cropping systems, organic or other food certifications, food safety, community involvement, and economic impacts while interns earn wages. Many times, this circular benefit is not possible without funding boosts such as this. This is a 'win' for all directions of agricultural production and education.

Your **YES** vote on this bill will ensure those wanting to learn more about agricultural entrepreneurship, and those who wish to share more about it, can. I humbly ask for your support for this bill and its positive impacts to all Minnesotans.

Thank you.

Lori D. Cox, owner
Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC