



March 8, 2023

Dear **Senator Boldon and Rep Tabke and members of the Committee**

Thank you members of the Committee. My name is Michael Chaney and writing on behalf of Project Sweetie Pie a network of Urban Farmers in North Minneapolis. I live in Minneapolis, MN. PSP in concert with other urban farmers created the first urban farm legislation in the nation. We worked in concert with the Minnesota Department of Ag to pass that legislation. I am also a founding member of the Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, a group of 100 farmers of color in urban, suburban and rural communities in MN and a member of the City of Minneapolis Green Zone Task Force.

As cultivators of food and land stewardship in Minneapolis, we know the importance of protecting our ecosystems and pollinators, that the health of our food system and so our people is inextricably linked with theirs. We need to stop separating agriculture and environmental policy because our realities are not separate. We need higher protections of our communities and animals against pesticides, herbicides and harmful chemicals and deserve the right to set standards for hazards to our health to the highest levels. Recently PSP received funding from the USDA/NRCS to coordinate The People's Garden Initiative on behalf of the state of Minnesota. We are one of 17 cities addressing global warming/food access/food security. One of our collaborative partners on that project is Xerxes Society. We are working diligently installing pollinator gardens on all of our scattered garden sites. Our sustainability as farmers is hinged to the sustainability of our bee population.

Our members agree that communities need strong local control—and we know from experience that rights that are not defended are lost, and that we keep them strong by standing together.

We learned that Minnesotans lost our local control over pesticides in the 1980s, around the time an industry-led preemption campaign was carried out in multiple states. MN was one of them.

Communities of color and low-income communities have so often been sacrificial communities when it comes to toxic development, brown fields, bus depots, and incinerators, already have air and water quality concerns—health concerns—but because of pre-emption can't act to reduce pesticides locally. And communities can't help take on the burden of pollinator protection from pesticides, even if they want to.

SF608 / HF1130 is a first step in restoring local control, allowing cities to protect pollinators and people from toxic pesticides.



Many communities have unique needs and problems related to pesticides that should be addressed on a local level. Currently, mayors and city governments have their hands tied when they are faced with a problem related to pesticides.

Our youth and families are already dealing with a lot of health issues, food insecurity, Lupus, Lymes Disease, Asthma, Diabetes, among others. We want to know that we can take efforts to protect our communities and natural systems from harmful pesticides and chemicals. Please support local control for our communities today.

Thank you for your time.

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