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March 5, 2024

Chair Samantha Vang  
House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Vang and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I want to thank you for your attention to water quality in Southeast Minnesota and across the state. We are glad to share our support for Representative Jacob's bill (HF4044), which aims to address part of this important issue.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities since 1918. Safe drinking water is a fundamental value for all Minnesotans, including our members who live, farm, and raise families in Southeast Minnesota. We are committed to continuing to work together on long-term solutions that protect groundwater and promote rural economic vitality.

We're glad to share our support for piloting a tax credit for acres certified through Minnesota's nation-leading Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP), which is proven to reduce nitrate loss. Many of our members are Ag Water Quality certified, and we've long supported the program which offers whole-farm technical assistance for farmers to assess and improve their operations. The program now has over one million acres enrolled, and farmers are finding new ways to adapt their management to address concerns about climate, soil health, biodiversity, and water quality through MAWQCP and the MAWQCP endorsements. MAWQCP certified farms on average see a 49 percent reduction in nitrate loss through the adoption of conservation practices like reduced tillage, cover crops, and nutrient management. Piloting a tax credit in counties in Southeast Minnesota could accelerate interest in this impactful program and advance adoption of soil health practices across the region.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective on this proposal. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at [stu@mfu.org](mailto:stu@mfu.org) or (320) 232-2047. Thank you for your work to protect the livelihoods of Minnesota's farm families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Wertish  
President, Minnesota Farmers Union