



May 6, 2022

Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senate President Jeremy Miller
3113 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Torrey Westrom
Agriculture and Rural Development Finance
and Policy Committee
3201 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

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

Dear Minnesota decision makers:

I currently serve as Advocacy and Governance Specialist at Seward Community Cooperative in Minneapolis. We operate two full-service grocery stores and a production kitchen. Founded in 1972, Seward Co-op is now owned by more than 22,000 community members. We provide locally grown organic produce, locally raised meats, prepared foods, and more. The co-op's mission is to sustain a healthy community that has equitable economic relationships; positive environmental impacts; and inclusive, socially responsible practices. As a cooperatively owned food business, we strongly believe small-scale farmers need continuing support in order to manage and grow their operations. Food co-ops depend on reliable product from farms in Minnesota.

We are excited to see the many innovative projects that will be under consideration as you decide what to include in the final Agriculture Omnibus Bill. **Seward Community Co-op urges leadership to give Agriculture a budget target that reflects the importance of agriculture to Minnesota's economy and supports farmers and communities.** A robust agriculture bill will support a robust and resilient Minnesota food and agriculture system, and Minnesota's current budget surplus gives us room to invest in this support.

Within the last two Minnesota harvest seasons we have collectively experienced pandemic upheaval and the stress of major weather events that have exposed the fragility of our supply chains. We have seen the ability of small and mid-sized farms to pivot to address food insecurity and fill market disruptions. This has not come without considerable statewide collaborative efforts by farmers, food systems professionals and organizations, as well as local and state agencies.

We cannot wait until the next session to continue these initiatives. This cannot happen efficiently or effectively without the support of our elected leaders and democratic institutions. We urge a bill this year that supports our farmers and enables everyone to put food on the table. Thank you for your work supporting our farm and food systems!

Sincerely,
Allison A. Meyer
Advocacy and Governance Specialist
Seward Community Co-op
www.seward.coop

A member of the MinneAg Network - www.MinneAg.org

Cc:
Commissioner Thom Petersen, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Senator Draheim
Senator Dornink
Senator Pratt
Senator Dziejczak
Representative Hausman
Representative Howard
Representative Vang
Representative Theis