

# HF4098/SF5049-Response

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Chair Vang and Chair Putnam and members of the Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for offering an opportunity to respond to HF4098/SF5049.

I am writing to express concern about this legislation and the precedent it sets for defining public policy and public investments. I understand that the catalyst for this legislation is the lawsuit filed against Governor Walz and Commissioner Petersen.

Barring this circumstance, I do not believe that this legislation would be introduced. Only last year we were celebrating public policy signed into law that recognized the needs of BIPOC farmers, woman farmers, and LGBTQ farmers and provided material support to meet those needs.

Passing that legislation was a defining moment. By providing resources to community members that have been and continue to be economically marginalized as a direct result of public policies defined by enduring systemic racism, our leaders chose to set a new course.

With that legislation, leaders chose to acknowledge rather than ignore the systemic racism that defines our nation's story. The decision to recognize the harms and write public policy and provide modest funding to offer an economic path for marginalized farmers reflected values that we claim in this state. *It demonstrated that while it may be uncomfortable to acknowledge the harmful impacts generated by past and current inequities, it is a necessary precondition for outlining public policy and allocating public funding.*

Today, we face another defining moment together. I think we can agree that the lawsuit that precipitated filing of HF4098/SF5049 will not be the last challenge to laws adopted by Minnesota to set a course defined by fairness and equity. If we are to succeed in forging a path forward defined by our values, we must be prepared together to defend them courageously.

Thank you for your leadership.

Marita Bujold