



Date: March 18, 2022

Testimony in Support of HF4120 (Lippert) Farm to School Grants - Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Good day to Committee Chairs and Members. My name is Lori Cox, owner of Roots Return Heritage Farm in Carver County where we rent our farm to new and emerging food producers.

I write today in support of Representative Lippert's bill HF4120. Minnesota's local and regional food systems have been in existence and have worked to expand for our growing population and nutritional needs. State investment into these systems and youth can only lead to a more prepared student population to succeed, to learn about the links between nutrition and intellectual capability, and provide MN producers with more connections to economic independence. Dollars are kept within communities which benefit us all. Direct-to-consumer, school, and institution producers are absolutely vital to healthy, nearby food access. The pandemic highlighted the importance of local healthy foods and immunity, especially when multi-level supply chains fail. The stronger our local foodsheds, schools and youth are, the stronger we all are.

Local foods producers reflect sustainability, are the basis of clean environments, tax burden reduction, and feed the world right here at home. Linking food producers and youth throughout MN are the tangible community fabric we need to keep, and make whole with smart investments. Schools and institutions are asking for more connection within their own communities, and all students benefit.

I respectfully ask for your support of this bill. Thank you for prioritizing students, schools, and food producers across Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Lori D. Cox, Owner, Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC