



May 5, 2021

To the Agriculture Finance and Policy Conference Committee:

I urge you to support the proposed funding for emerging farmers in this years' budget. As the Executive Director of Mill City Farmers Market, I see the challenges that all farmers, and especially emerging farmers, face every day.

The **House 7.20** and **7.24** proposals will support emerging farmers who are essential participants in our agricultural economy and our local food system. These two provisions will support the legislatively created working group, which is currently operating with *no dedicated funding* (7.20) and will establish an emerging farmer coordinator position who will provide staff support for these farmers *who have not been adequately served in the past* (7.24).

Emerging farmers -- which includes veterans, women, Indigenous, people of color, immigrants, young, and urban farmers -- face barriers in agriculture that were well documented in the [2020 Legislative report](#). These include access to land, capital, and training resources, as well as other issues like discrimination and access to culturally appropriate resources. The funds provided by these two proposals would allow for significant progress to be made in ensuring that Minnesota agriculture is accessible to all who call Minnesota home.

Emerging farmers in our state are an important part of the future of Minnesota agriculture. We are facing a major generational farm transition and many children of our immigrant farmers may not take over the farm due to the difficulties they face. By engaging emerging farmers in the conversations, supporting them thru this dedicated funding and addressing the issues they face firsthand we have a chance to support access and equity in our culturally diverse local food system.

Thank you for your support of these initiatives and look forward to working with you all in the future to support Minnesota's farmers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MA", written over a faint, large watermark of the Mill City Farmers Market logo.

Martha Archer
Executive Director
Mill City Farmers Market