

April 28, 2025

Co-Chair Zach Stephenson
Co-Chair Paul Torkelson
House Ways and Means Committee
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Stephenson and Torkelson and committee members:

On behalf of the farmers, workers, small businesses and other concerned citizens our organizations represent, we write to share our support for the FY26-27 budget proposed by the Attorney General's Office (AGO). The increased funding proposed by the AGO will help protect fair, open and competitive markets in Minnesota and build a strong economy.

The increased concentration of economic power touches nearly every aspect of our economy. Between 1997 and 2012 approximately 75% of industries became more consolidated, while the US economy grew 50% more concentrated since 2005.¹ At the current rate of consolidation, it is estimated that the US will have just one company per industry by 2070.² The growing power of corporate monopolies harms Minnesotans, as giant firms use their power to raise prices, lower wages, offshore jobs, hurt smaller businesses, and influence public policy and politics.

In 2023 the legislature provided a significant investment in the AGO that provided for additional resources to enforce antitrust, consumer protection and wage theft laws. That additional investment has allowed for creation of an Antitrust Division at the AGO and resulted in important litigation against companies engaged in wage theft, worker misclassification, price-fixing, monopolization, and deceptive lending and marketing practices.

The AGO's proposed FY26-27 budget would build on this work in two critical ways. The proposal would allow the AGO to hire an additional attorney in the Antitrust Division. The Antitrust Division has brought important enforcement actions against pesticide manufacturers, pharmaceutical giants, opioid manufacturers, health insurance companies, property management companies and farm equipment manufacturers. This would grow the Antitrust Division to seven attorneys, in line with states of similar size such as Connecticut (7 FTE), Colorado (6 FTE), and Washington (10 FTE).³

The proposal would also enable the Consumer Litigation Account established by the legislature in 2023 to become a revolving fund using a small percentage of recoveries from those cases. That account supports multistate litigation across the AGO's Consumer Protection Section which includes the Consumer Protection, Antitrust, Civil Rights and Wage Theft Divisions. Turning this fund into a revolving fund will enhance the AGO's ability to join other states in addressing anticompetitive conduct.

¹ bit.ly/bostonfedconcentration

² <https://economicsecurityproject.org/work/antimonopoly/>

³ <https://som.yale.edu/centers/thurman-arnold-project-at-yale/modern-antitrust-enforcement>

As the legislature completes its work on SF3045 we urge members to keep these proposals in consideration as they are an important part of addressing our highly concentrated economy. Thank you for your work in protecting the progress that has been made. We look forward to working with you to build on it.

Sincerely,

Minnesota Farmers Union
American Economic Liberties Project
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
North Star Prosperity
SEIU Healthcare MN & IA
Small Business Majority
Land Stewardship Project
CURE
Open Markets Institute
Minnesota Nurses Association
MNIndys
AFSCME 65



305 Roselawn Ave E | Suite 200 | St. Paul, MN 55117
Phone: (651) 639-1223 | www.mfu.org

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Co-Chair Zach Stephenson
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House Ways and Means Committee
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Stephenson and Torkelson and committee members:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I am writing to share our thoughts on SF3045 which contains the FY26-27 budget for the Attorney General's Office. Considering the state's difficult budget challenges, MFU appreciates that this bill protects the work Attorney General Keith Ellison has done in recent years to prioritize investments in protecting fair, open and competitive markets in Minnesota.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. At our annual convention in November, MFU members voted to make Ensuring Fair Markets a key priority and identified investing in antitrust agencies as important to that goal.

Farmers find themselves on the front lines of our monopoly crisis facing extreme consolidation for both the inputs they rely on and the markets they need to access. While corporate monopolies make record profits, farmers now receive under 16 cents of each dollar consumers spend on food, which is down from 50 cents in 1952.¹ Addressing this challenge requires robust antitrust enforcement at both a federal and state level, and Minnesota is leading on these issues.

Because of the investments legislators made in recent years, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) has been able to expand their antitrust enforcement team and establish a separate Antitrust Division. This investment is helping protect Minnesotans from powerful companies that abuse their market power. Highlights of that work include:

- A 2022 lawsuit with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) alleging pesticide manufacturers Syngenta and Corteva used loyalty programs to raise costs on farmers.
- A 2023 lawsuit with the Department of Justice (DOJ) alleging Agri Stats and major meatpackers colluded to fix the price of meat and raise costs on consumers.
- The 2023 investigation of the Sanford-Fairview merger and subsequent implementation of a nation-leading law strengthening standards for large healthcare mergers.
- A 2025 lawsuit with the FTC alleging John Deere has monopolized the market for repairs of its tractors and combines.


SF3045 will protect the progress that has been made to build a more active and aggressive Antitrust Division. However, MFU is supportive of the funding increase proposed by the AGO, which would have added an additional attorney to the Antitrust Division and made the recently established Consumer Litigation Account more sustainable by turning it into a revolving fund. The Consumer Litigation Account was established in 2023 with one-time funding and supports

multistate litigation across the AGO's Consumer Protection Section which includes the Consumer Protection, Antitrust, Civil Rights and Wage Theft Divisions.

Multistate antitrust cases are particularly important for protecting fair markets in agriculture but are often complex and costly. Making the Consumer Litigation Account a revolving fund will help ensure the AGO has the resources needed to continue strong enforcement of our antitrust laws and also mirrors how antitrust enforcement is funded in other states. We hope that as this bill continues to move, members will take the AGO's proposals into account.

If you have any questions, please contact our Antimonopoly Director, Justin Stofferahn, at justin@mfu.org or (612) 594-1252 (C). Thank you for considering the needs and perspectives of Minnesota's farm families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "W".

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union

¹ <https://nfu.org/farmers-share/>



**Canvassing access to multiple unit buildings by
candidates and census workers standards modified.**
H.F. 2709, included in HF 1943, as amended

Chairs Torkelson and Stephenson, and Members of the Committee,

The Minnesota Multi Housing Association (MHA) appreciates the opportunity to share our concerns regarding the inclusion of language from **HF 2709** in **HF 1943**. While we are generally supportive of efforts at expanding access for political candidates and census workers in multiple unit buildings, we are concerned that the current proposal would create significant operational and financial burdens for multifamily housing providers and also raise perceived security concerns for residents and staff.

Our primary concerns include:

- **Staffing and scheduling challenges:** Requiring access between 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. with only 24 hours' notice could force property staff to work unanticipated and extended hours, particularly if access is requested on weekends or holidays.
- **Increased operational costs:** Most multifamily properties do not maintain staff on-site during the full proposed access window. Complying with the bill may require hiring additional personnel or incurring overtime costs. These expenses may ultimately contribute to higher housing costs.
- **Disruption of operations:** A flat 24-hour notice requirement does not account for pre-scheduled events, maintenance activities, or holiday closures that could reasonably limit a property's ability to accommodate access on short notice.
- **Security concerns:** Permitting entry to individuals not known to property staff and not guests of residents presents real safety concerns, particularly in secure-access buildings. Without clear vetting or credentialing procedures, the bill could unintentionally create opportunities for unauthorized or malicious entry.

We are confident there is a path forward that honors the goals of this legislation while also respecting the legitimate needs of residents, property staff, and housing providers. We welcome further dialogue on this issue and would appreciate the opportunity to constructively engage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen Neubauer", written over a horizontal line.

Owen Neubauer
Director of Public Policy

