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March 9, 2021

Chair Jamie Long  
House Climate and Energy Finance and Policy  
517 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Long and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to express support for expanding access to the Community Solar Garden (CSG) program, including by eliminating the 'contiguous county restriction.' This will allow more farmers to participate in the program, diversifying their farm income and helping them contribute to the green economy.

MFU is a grassroots membership organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities since 1918. Farmers are on the front lines of the climate crisis, experiencing some of its early effects in the form of extreme weather, unpredictable growing seasons, and increased risk of plant and animal disease. In the face of these challenges, farmers are coming up with innovative ways to remain economically resilient and contribute to combatting climate change.

One opportunity many of our members are exploring is diversifying their farm income through leasing a portion of their farmland for community solar, which can complement their existing operations and ensure a reliable farm income. Expanding the opportunity to participate in the CSG program is one way to make it easier for farmers to not only improve their farm economics, but also do their part to reduce carbon emissions.

I appreciate your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at [stu@mfu.org](mailto:stu@mfu.org) or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for your work on behalf of farmers and all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "G" and a long, sweeping tail.

Gary Wertish  
President, Minnesota Farmers Union

CC: Representative Patty Acomb