



**LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT**

LEWISTON OFFICE
180 East Main St, Box 130
Lewiston, MN 55952
507-523-3366

MINNEAPOLIS OFFICE
821 East 35th St, #200
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612-722-6377

MONTEVIDEO OFFICE
117 South 1st St
Montevideo, MN 56265
320-269-2105

March 24th, 2025

Minnesota House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Dear Co-Chair Anderson, Co-Chair Hansen, and Committee members,

I am writing on behalf of Land Stewardship Project's (LSP's) 4,500 member households made up of farmers, rural residents, and supporters in strong support of HF 1796. As part of LSP's mission to foster an ethic of stewardship and promote sustainable agriculture, we have active soil health hubs and grazing groups in Southeast and Western, MN and many of those farmers have livestock or are interested in adding livestock to their operation for the soil health benefits they provide and additional income streams. One of the five principles of soil health is integrating livestock into your farming system to build soil organic matter, allow cattle to graze crop residue and naturally fertilize fields. A few of the barriers of introducing livestock are infrastructure pieces such as fencing, watering systems, and proper shelter for animals which can be cost prohibitive and is where the Livestock Investment Grant can be a gamechanger.

We support the proposed changes in HF1796 which would provide a 50 percent cost share on qualifying investments up to \$20,000 and a 20 percent cost share on the next \$200,000 for a cost share maximum of \$200,000. This is a change from the current 10 percent match on projects up to \$250,000. If a farmer has a \$5,000 project cost, the \$500 they could earn with the current grant structure may not be worth the effort to apply and prevent beginning farmers especially from applying and taking advantage of the program, who may not have the capital to cover the remaining 90 percent of the project. Adjusting the cost-share percentages will serve more farmers and in turn allow more farmers to support their local feed mill, seed, and supply stores that thrive on small livestock producers. Livestock are a great entry especially for beginning farmers and adjusting this cost share percentages will allow more beginning farmers to utilize this program.

Thank you and we urge the committee to support this policy change in HF1796,

Laura Schreiber, Government Relations Director