

Subject Data practices

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Summary

This bill would modify the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act to prevent public access to information collected and maintained by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Minnesota State college and university system, and other pass-through recipients when that information identifies an individual who is connected to farming or agriculture and 1) sought assistance with a mental or behavioral health issue, or 2) contacted the Minnesota Farm & Rural Helpline. In addition to information identifying the individual, the bill would also classify any information provided by the individual that identifies another person.

The bill would allow the entities to release this private or nonpublic information in an emergency if necessary to protect the health or safety of any person.

Under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, there is a general presumption that information collected by the state, a statewide system, or a political subdivision is public and accessible by the public for both inspection and copying unless there is federal law, a state statute, or a temporary classification that shields the information from public view (Minn. Stat. § 13.01). This bill would create an exception to this presumption for the specified information.