

From: Pam Arnold, Salt N Pepper Farm
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Date: 29 March 2022

To: Minnesota House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
Re: **In Support for Highways for Habitat Bill HF4313**

There are many Minnesotans, like me, who support this bill. Why? Because many of us spend too much time driving on highways and wonder why the incredible numbers of acres of roadside aren't being used to benefit the insects, birds, mammals, our air, and the view shed from our cars. My route to the Twin Cities from Scandia MN cuts through Forest Lake onto 35W, on-thru the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes—the source for Twin Cities water, and into the din of malls, suburban developments, and industrial office parks. OVER THE MANY YEARS I HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO TRAFFIC POLLUTION AND INADVERTENT OTHER AFFRONTS TO THE ROADSIDE ECOSYSTEM I wonder, WHY aren't we making better ecosystems from the roadsides? I've seen plenty of old farms, wetlands, forests... succumb to the expanding highways. What can we do to reclaim these under-considered places, once vital features of the landscape and our watersheds?

I live along the St Croix River, off of St Croix Trail, a Scenic Byway... The roadsides are often cut by farmers for hay. I've wondered about their "right" to this resource, but more importantly, the health and safety of feeding contaminated grass to livestock, and other farm animals. My farm is a MN Dept of Ag certified Water Quality Assured farm, and I am a beekeeper. These two facts reflect my moral, and ethical commitment to good stewardship and neighborliness to all creatures.

I support HF4313 whole heartedly on behalf of the potential for the good it would create. We know that many migrating birds, and insects find their way to seasonal nesting grounds via river and road routes. I learned recently from Joy Harjo, our US Poet Laureate and First Nation American, that Interstate 35 was originally a foot path that connected the northcentral to the southwest United States. For a healthier and more life-giving future, I would insist *if I had the power* that every meter of highway be joined by an equal quantity of forage-able, pedestrian, animal and insect thoroughfare, including pollinator friendly plants and trees of all kinds. My power is as a voter, and a citizen. I have elected you to do the right thing. This bill is the right thing and would produce richness now and into the future.

Thank you,

Pam Arnold, Farmer/Owner
Salt N Pepper Farm