



April 29, 2021

Minnesota House of Representatives
Agriculture & Broadband Conference Committee
417 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Minnesota Senate
Agriculture & Broadband Conference Committee
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3201
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Sundin, Chair Westrom, and Agriculture & Broadband Conference Committee Members:

As the leaders of Minnesota's six Feeding America food banks, we thank you for supporting Minnesota's Farm to Food Shelf program in your respective Agriculture budgets. We would like to formally express our support for S.F. 958's base funding of \$1.7 million per year, as this allocation maintains funding levels we have received over the last biennium, ensuring food banks do not see a decrease in funding at a time when Minnesota families are most in need.

We are also grateful both committees chose to further Farm to Food Shelf's reach by including language allowing food banks to procure locally produced or processed protein. Produce, dairy and protein are the most in-demand items at Minnesota's food shelves, and Farm to Food Shelf ensures our food banks can source these products from local growers and producers. Farm to Food Shelf has been and continues to be a vital part of our efforts to ensure that no family in Minnesota faces the Covid-19 crisis hungry, while enabling food banks to support our state's agriculture industry during unprecedented times.

Unfortunately, we know that the need for food assistance will be with us for many more months, if not years, to come. Our hope is that as additional federal funding becomes available this spring, our state leaders will invest in programs that support the one in nine Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity. This includes funding the procurement of additional milk, protein, and culturally appropriate foods; offering financial support for food shelves; bolstering the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and providing opportunities to expand the distribution of prepared meals. Together, these tools will strengthen Minnesota's emergency food response as families weather the long-term effects of this public health and economic crisis.

Thank you again for your commitment to the Farm to Food Shelf program and to our neighbors experiencing hunger.

Best,

Virginia Merritt, Executive Director
Channel One Regional Food Bank
Rochester, MN

Steve Sellent, Chief Executive Officer
Great Plains Food Bank
Moorhead, MN



Susie Novak Boelter, Executive Director
North Country Food Bank, Inc.
East Grand Forks, MN



Susan Estee, Executive Director
Second Harvest North Central Food Bank
Grand Rapids, MN



Allison O'Toole, Chief Executive Officer
Second Harvest Heartland
Brooklyn Park, MN



Shaye Moris, Executive Director
Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank
Duluth, MN

CC: Commissioner Thom Petersen