



May 9, 2022

Chair Torrey Westrom
Senate Agriculture and Rural Development
Finance and Policy Committee
3201 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 551155

Chair Mike Sundin
House Agriculture Finance and Policy
Committee
417 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Westrom, Chair Sundin and members of the conference committee,

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) appreciates the opportunity to voice our support and concerns about specific provisions included in the omnibus agriculture and housing supplemental finance bill. MCGA represents nearly 6,500 dues-paying corn farmer members and the research and education activities of 24,000 Minnesota corn farmers who contribute to the corn checkoff program.

MCGA supports:

- Funding for grants to farmers to implement soil health practices. Grants should not be limited to traditional cost-share and include down payments on equipment, purchases or subscriptions of equipment technology, seed and soil amendments or technical assistance. Funding structured in this way can help to overcome barriers to soil health practice adoption. MCGA strongly supports the Senate language (Article 3 Sec. 2) establishing an Ag BMP grant program, which has been supported by a coalition of agriculture groups. This program would allow the state to move forward with an all-of-the above strategy to increase soil health practice adoption across the state rather than a one size fits all approach that has been proposed in the past.
- Funding for the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at the University of Minnesota. We appreciate both the House and Senate recognizing the importance of the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory as they work to effectively respond to animal diseases.
- \$2 million for noxious weed and invasive plant species (House) Increasing the funding for noxious weed grants ensures that counties and local municipalities have the funding they need to manage noxious weeds.
- Funding for the Agriculture Utilization Research Institute. We appreciate the House and Senate including funding for equipment upgrades and replacement at AURI laboratories in Crookston, Marshall and Waseca.

MCGA has concerns:

- Banning plastic-coated pesticide and fertilizer (House). Banning crop protection tools that farmers currently use with no reasonable, affordable or viable alternatives increases costs for farmers and ultimately consumers.
- Treated seed disposal and consumer guidance (House). Without any direction from the Legislature the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has recently developed [guidance](#) on treated seed disposal. This unilateral action not only raises questions about the MPCA's authority to publish this guidance but also it renders these provisions directing and appropriated funds to the Department of Agriculture for treated seed disposal guidance completely unnecessary.
- Early sunset on the Bioincentive Program (House). Sunsetting the eligibility for new production facilities to participate in the Bioincentive Program at the end of 2022 would be counter to Minnesota's forward-thinking approach to the future as facilities look at ways to produce sustainable aviation fuel and other advanced biofuels.

If you or your staff have any questions, please feel free to reach out to MCGA's Senior Public Policy Director Amanda Bilek at 952-460-3604 or at abilek@mncorn.org. We are always happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Bryan Biegler
President
Minnesota Corn Growers Association

CC:

Senator Rich Draheim
Senator Gene Dornink
Senator Eric Pratt
Senator Kari Dziedzic
Representative Alice Hausman
Representative Michael Howard
Representative Samantha Vang
Representative Tama Theis