



February 22, 2022

House Agricultural Finance and Policy Committee Members
House of Representatives
417 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Sundin and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HF3264, the micro farm premium assistance and technical assistance program, introduced by Vice Chair Vang.

In over ten years of experience working to connect farmers to institutional markets such as schools and early care environments, I have seen the systemic barriers that emerging farmers face in access to capital and appropriate support navigating systems that were not designed with them in mind.

The micro grants supported by this bill offer crucial support to emerging farmers, for whom even a small infusion of funds can make an impact in growing and sustaining their businesses. Additionally, support for the Hmong American Farmers Association and the Latino Economic Development Center to provide technical assistance to farmers will ensure that the support is able to reach farmers who will most benefit from this timely intervention. The new MDA Emerging Farmers Working Group 2022 Legislative Report published January 25 highlights again the importance of tangible work to improve outcomes for emerging farmers, and this program represents exactly that.

We stand in strong support of this bill, and urge members of the committee to support it.

Sincerely,

Erin McKee

Community Food Systems Program Director