



Connected **for Life**

March 21, 2022

Chair Sundin and Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee:

My name is Carissa Kemp and I am the Director of State Government Affairs for the American Diabetes Association® (ADA), the nation's leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic.

I want to thank Representative Lippert for introducing legislation to build upon to the farm-to-school grants program and expand access for childcare providers. We know that obesity puts children at risk for developing diabetes and providing regular access to healthy foods at schools and childcare facilities can help fight childhood obesity.

Farm-to-School programs increase fruit and vegetable consumption in kids, and kids who are well nourished learn better in school. The programs also connect crops, cafeterias, and classrooms educating students about agriculture and nutrition. The Minnesota Farm-to-School Program will directly benefit farmers and producers - stimulating our economy, fostering healthy eating habits in children, and helping to stem long-term health care costs related to obesity and diabetes.

All kids deserve healthy, high quality food. By sourcing locally, students can receive food that is fresher and often more tasty than food that has traveled a far distance. This exposure contributes toward developing a life-long taste for healthy and fresh foods. This experience will help kids make healthy food choices outside of school.<sup>1</sup> By starting children off on a healthy path, we can lower their risk for diabetes and other obesity-related diseases.

On behalf of your constituents who are living with or at risk for diabetes, I urge you to support HB 4120 as another tool to help address childhood obesity and the long-term health of our children. Thank you very much for your attention. If you have any questions, please direct them to me at [ckemp@diabetes.org](mailto:ckemp@diabetes.org) and I will do my best to answer them for you.

Thank you,

Carissa Kemp  
Director of State Government Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> National Farm to School Network, *The Benefits of Farm to School*, [https://assets.website-files.com/5c469df2395cd53c3d913b2d/611027419232d281ad2f51ff\\_BenefitsFactSheet.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/5c469df2395cd53c3d913b2d/611027419232d281ad2f51ff_BenefitsFactSheet.pdf)

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