

March 9, 2021

Representative Frank Hornstein
House Transportation Finance & Policy Committee Chair
545 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hornstein and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota AgriGrowth Council (AgriGrowth), we are writing to express our support for House File 1163 chief authored by Majority Leader Ryan Winkler.

The Minnesota AgriGrowth Council (AgriGrowth) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan member organization representing the broad cross section of the agriculture and food systems industry, including agribusinesses, production agriculture, processors, food manufacturers, and numerous other entities throughout the food-supply chain.

Known as the “Driver’s Licenses for All” legislation, House File 1163 would require all drivers, including unauthorized immigrants, to prove their identity and residency, pass a driving test, and secure vehicle insurance before driving a vehicle in the State of Minnesota.

House File 1163 is particularly important to Minnesota’s agriculture and food sectors, which rely on an immigrant workforce that is able to operate legally and safely on Minnesota roads and highways. Many agriculture and agribusiness employers are increasingly dependent on an immigrant workforce. For example, immigrant labor has increasingly filled the on-farm labor gap for many dairy farmers – for some Minnesota dairy farmers, immigrant labor now makes up a large percentage of their hired workforce. However, this also creates challenges in that just the act of getting to and from work can be an issue for these employees. It also restricts those employees’ ability to perform any tasks that would require operating vehicles on roads.

We believe this legislation would also improve the ability of local law enforcement officials to identify drivers during traffic stops and after accidents, as well as enhance public safety by allowing immigrant workers to obtain driving privileges. And because the licensing of drivers is a state responsibility, many states are addressing this issue proactively rather than waiting for federal immigration reform to provide a solution. Minnesota too must do everything possible to ensure that road users receive sufficient preparation and pass required tests to be licensed to operate a vehicle.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments in support of House File 1163 and we thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,



Tamara A. Nelsen
Executive Director