



May 6, 2022

Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senate President Jeremy Miller  
3113 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman  
463 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Mike Sundin  
House Committee on Agriculture Finance  
and Policy  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Torrey Westrom  
Agriculture and Rural Development Finance  
and Policy Committee  
3201 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Minnesota decision makers:

Sprout MN is a nonprofit rural food hub located in Central Minnesota. Sprout MN was founded with a mission to build an agricultural economy that supports farmers and builds communities.

We are excited to see the many innovative projects that will be under consideration as you decide what to include in the final Agriculture Omnibus Bill. Sprout MN **urges leadership to give Agriculture a budget target that reflects the importance of agriculture to Minnesota's economy and supports farmers and communities.** A robust agriculture bill will support a robust and resilient Minnesota food and agriculture system, and Minnesota's current budget surplus gives us room to invest in this support.

Sprout MN's priority areas for funding include:

- Farm to School
- Local food economic impact data collection to strengthen Minnesota's position on the local, regional and global markets
- Support for emerging farmers
- Meat processing



- Local food relief initiatives

Within the last two Minnesota harvest seasons we have collectively experienced pandemic upheaval and the stress of major weather events that have exposed the fragility of our supply chains. We have seen the ability of small and mid-sized farms to pivot to address food insecurity and fill market disruptions. This has not come without considerable statewide collaborative efforts by farmers, food systems professionals and organizations, as well as local and state agencies.

We cannot wait until the next session to continue these initiatives. This cannot happen efficiently or effectively without the support of our elected leaders and democratic institutions. We urge a bill this year that supports our farmers and enables everyone to put food on the table. Thank you for your work supporting our farm and food systems!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Arlene Jones".

Arlene Jones, Co-Founder and Executive Director

Owner, The Farm on St. Mathias

*A member of the MinneAg Network - [www.MinneAg.org](http://www.MinneAg.org)*

Cc:

Commissioner Thom Petersen, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Senator Draheim

Senator Dornink

Senator Pratt

Senator Dziejcz

Representative Hausman

Representative Howard

Representative Vang

Representative Theis