



To: House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division
Re: **Support for University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative (HF 2061)**

March 14, 2019

Dear Representative,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our strong support for HF 2061, which provides full funding for the University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative.

The Forever Green Initiative:

The University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative is a highly respected research effort designed to develop new, economically viable perennial crops and winter annual crops which protect our soil and water while providing a stable return for local farmers.

Diverse crop rotations are a critical piece of profitable agricultural production. Integrating perennial and winter annual crops into existing farming systems provides growers with new revenue streams and new marketing options. Additionally, as a perennial, Kernza has the potential to be a profitable crop for buffer strips.

These crops also have the potential to bolster our rural agricultural economy through the development of high- value, commercially marketable food, feed and fuel products.

Specifically, Forever Green crops can:

- Foster new economic opportunities for Minnesota family farmers;
- Diversify crop rotations and farm income streams;
- Attract new investment and employment in emerging rural agricultural industries;
- Protect drinking water and improve public health;
- Improve water quality in surface waters and groundwater;
- Enhance soil health and carbon sequestration;
- Enhance habitat for wildlife and pollinators;
- Attract high quality talent to the University of Minnesota to meet the future workforce needs of the agriculture, food, energy and natural resource based industries in Minnesota.

The University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative is a national leader in developing new crop options that can enhance our environment and economy throughout Minnesota.

Forever Green legislation

HF 2061 requests \$10 million to support the Forever Green Initiative this biennium.

When fully funded, the Forever Green Initiative will make Minnesota the unquestioned leader in developing more sustainable, profitable and diversified cropping systems that improve habitat, water quality, climate and soil health while boosting rural economic development.

We urge you to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Executive Director

ACES (Austin Coalition for Environmental Sustainability)
Alliance for Sustainability
CURE (Clean Up Our River Environment)
Clean Water Action - Minnesota
Conservation Minnesota *
Environment Minnesota
Environmental Working Group
Freshwater
Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas
Friends of the Mississippi River
Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy *
Izaak Walton League - Minnesota Division
Land Stewardship Project
Minnesota Ornithologists Union
Minnesota Native Plant Society
Minnesota Trout Unlimited
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Minnesota Native Plant Society
MN350
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
St. Croix River Association
Sustainable Farming Association

* Denotes not a member of Minnesota Environmental Partnership