



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 Torrey Westrom  
Agriculture and Rural Development Finance  
and Policy Committee  
3201 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
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

Dear Minnesota decision makers:

I currently serve as Advocacy and Governance Specialist at Seward Community Cooperative in Minneapolis. We operate two full-service grocery stores and a production kitchen. Founded in 1972, Seward Co-op is now owned by more than 22,000 community members. We provide locally grown organic produce, locally raised meats, prepared foods, and more. The co-op's mission is to sustain a healthy community that has equitable economic relationships; positive environmental impacts; and inclusive, socially responsible practices. As a cooperatively owned food business, we strongly believe small-scale farmers need continuing support in order to manage and grow their operations. Food co-ops depend on reliable product from farms in Minnesota.

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. **Seward Community Co-op 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.

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,  
Allison A. Meyer  
Advocacy and Governance Specialist  
Seward Community Co-op  
[www.seward.coop](http://www.seward.coop)

*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 Dziejczak  
Representative Hausman  
Representative Howard  
Representative Vang  
Representative Theis