



April 7, 2021

House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee  
Chair Mike Sundin  
417 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 551155

Dear Chair Sundin and committee members,

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony on the delete everything amendment for HF 1524 (Sundin), the Omnibus Agriculture Finance Bill. MCGA represents nearly 6,500 dues-paying corn farmer members and the research and education activities of 24,000 Minnesota corn farmers who contribute to the corn checkoff program.

There are a few items in the DE amendment and spreadsheet we would like to call to the committee's attention.

1. MCGA would like to thank the committee for the inclusion of the budget recommendation from Governor Walz for a \$2 million per year, ongoing, biofuel infrastructure grant program and an increase in the AGRI base. A key policy priority for MCGA is to expand access and use of higher ethanol blends to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, while giving engines a higher octane at a lower price. Minnesota leads the nation in the number retail locations offering higher blends of ethanol with more than 380 fuel stations offering E15. However, with nearly 3,600 fuel retail locations in Minnesota there is plenty of room for growth and an investment by the legislature in new grant funding will continue to help Minnesota make progress and continue to lead on higher ethanol blends that benefit consumers, the environment and the economy.
2. MCGA appreciates the continued base funding investment in the AGREETT program. The purpose of AGREETT is to support agricultural productivity and growth through research, education and extension through long-term base funding. Since 2015, when the AGREETT program was established by the legislature, significant progress has been made towards restoring and expanding capacity and research capabilities at the University of Minnesota in the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS), Extension and the College of Veterinary Medicine. The funding has led to the hiring of 20 faculty positions, 11 extension educators and a number of needed infrastructure upgrades in the areas of crop and livestock productivity, soil fertility, water quality and pest resistance.
3. Farm safety and grain bin safety is an important priority for MCGA. We have several partnerships to help share education and informational resources to help farmers be safe. Thank you for the inclusion of \$100,000 each year in farm safety grants administered by the MN Department of Agriculture. Farm safety grants coupled with educational resources from associations like MCGA can help to improve farm and grain bin safety across the state.

Finally, there are a couple areas where we would like to express some concerns.

Previously the committee considered and heard testimony on HF 766 (Hansen) and the Omnibus Agriculture Finance Bill includes sections one and three from the original bill. We would refer committee members to previous written testimony submitted by MCGA on HF 766 for additional details on our concerns, but in summary treated seed is not used to produce ethanol in Minnesota. Adding this language to a seed label or as a miscellaneous violation, gives members of the public the impression this is a practice in Minnesota, when that is not the case.

Additionally, MCGA is opposed to an increase in the gross sales for agricultural pesticides. Any increase in this fee will be passed onto farmers at a time when the price of inputs has increased in the last several years during a period of low commodity prices. It is only recently that commodity prices have improved, but that follows seven years of prices below the cost of production.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the delete everything amendment for HF 1524.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Waibel', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Tim Waibel  
President  
Minnesota Corn Growers Association