

March 23,2022

Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Pork Producers Association, representing Minnesota's family pig farmers, has concern regarding HF 3947. This bill appears to be a solution searching for a problem and would create another layer of unnecessary burden for farmers holding or seeking feedlot permits.

In 2020, the economics of livestock agriculture were challenged like no other time in recent memory. Milk was dumped, animals were depopulated, or put on maintenance diets to slow down regular growth. In that time, we believe there were no sites in Minnesota that were abandoned. To our knowledge, we are not aware of any feedlot facility over 1000 animal units (AU), at any time, where the state or county government has been left to manage or clean up an abandoned site. Lender liability for the environment is already in place for any site where the bank has foreclosed or taken possession of the site.

Furthermore, there is both economic and environmental benefit for a farm to maintain its permit for a site. Remodeling, rebuilding, or repurposing the facilities can preserve the value of the assets and their way of life in raising livestock. Permits are a large investment made by farmers, especially those over 1,000 AU, because of the financial cost and time invested in preparing and submitting a permit. There are clear alternatives and incentives for farms to not walk away from a site.

Beyond the above protections and incentives already in place, the value of manure from feedlots continues to increase. Many crop farms would gladly pay for manure to be applied to their fields, displacing the costs of commercial fertilizer, especially in today's environment with historically high fertilizer prices. Even in times of low fertilizer prices, manure is a valuable resource that provides nutrients for crops while building soil resiliency.

Finally, the Minnesota Pollutions Control Agency already has existing authority to deny permits to farms that have a history of compliance issues.

We encourage the committee to not support HF 3947.

Minnesota Pork Producers Association
Minnesota Milk Producers Association
Minnesota State Cattlemens Association
Minnesota Turkey Growers Association
Chicken and Egg Association of Minnesota
Compeer Financial
Minnesota Farm Bureau
Minnesota AgriGrowth Council