



305 Roselawn Ave E ■ Suite 200 ■ St. Paul, MN 55117
Phone: (651) 639-1223 ■ www.mfu.org

March 23, 2021

Chair Paul Marquart
House Tax Committee
597 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Marquart and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share my strong support for expanding the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit (BFTC) to help more young farmers build a life in agriculture (HF 1456). This successful and pioneering program helps young farmers in Minnesota get a leg up in accessing land, equipment, livestock, and other assets needed to run a successful farm operation.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. Farm transition is a key concern for our membership—young and more senior alike—particularly as the average age of a farmer in Minnesota approaches retirement.

We support strengthening this program by increasing the credit for sale of agricultural assets to socially disadvantaged farmers from 5 to 10 percent. This will provide additional and needed support to emerging farmers who too often are not coming into a generational operation, and who could benefit from the working relationships the credit helps broker with established farmers.

Similarly, extending the credit for sale of ag assets to family members will strengthen the program, helping more beginning farmers and better securing the sustainability of family farms. As any farmer will tell you, farm transitions are complex, costly, emotional, and seldom easy. Any support for getting new farmers on the land is a win for rural communities and the state.

Finally, providing the Rural Finance Authority (RFA) with the funding to administer the credit and create an online application form will improve access for beginning farmers.

I appreciate your consideration of HF 1456 and thank Chair Marquart for his leadership. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for your work on behalf of farmers and all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Wertish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union