

April 10, 2024

Representative Samatha Vang, Chair  
Minnesota House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Dear Chair Vang and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council (AgriGrowth), I am writing to express our strong support for HF 3411. In addition to renewing the Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC), this important bill extends AFREC's sunset date by 10 years and maintains funding as recommended by the AFREC Council.

Founded in 1968, AgriGrowth convenes leaders from across Minnesota's agri-food system and advocates on behalf of our entire industry. Our 140 members include farmers, cooperatives, research institutions, rural and metro ag service providers, and other agri-food businesses.

AgriGrowth's members have actively supported initiatives like AFREC in Minnesota and across our region and were instrumental in developing these programs. Research supported by AFREC has improved fertilizer efficiency, enhanced the understanding and use of cover crops, and advanced strategies that improve soil health and water quality. Losing this program and its peer-reviewed research will not only limit agriculture's ability to offer solutions to current environmental challenges but will also negatively impact our sector's ability to offer innovative solutions as climate change, demand for non-ag use of land, and other future challenges arise.

Some examples of AFREC's impact include:

- ✓ **Nutrient Management:** AFREC's research helps improve farmers' nutrient use efficiency; enabling them to produce more food with less environmental impact.
- ✓ **Soil Health & Water Quality:** AFREC's work actively explores strategies to reduce nitrogen fertilizer application; which is essential to minimize nitrate loss use and loss. Farmers know reducing nitrate loss is critical to maintaining clean water for all Minnesotans: They live on their land and their families rely on their wells.
- ✓ **Education & Outreach:** AFREC also funds conferences and efforts to educate farmers and crop consultants on key research findings via the annual Nutrient Management Conference and Nitrogen Conference; events AgriGrowth has supported for years.

We encourage you and your fellow committee to maintain AFREC and its extension.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tamara A. Nelsen  
Executive Director