

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

March 25, 2025

**RE: Testimony in support of H.F. 1522 from Fairhaven Farm**

Dear Chair Gomez and Members of the Committee,

We (John and Emily Beaton) operate Fairhaven Farm: a small-scale, family farm located just north of Duluth, Minnesota in St. Louis County. Our farm is situated on 27 acres. At our farm, we grow a 1-acre market garden consisting of vegetables, herbs, and cut flowers using bio-intensive methods. For the past several years have served over 50 households each year through our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program out of this intensive production space.

We also produce over 150 varieties of annual and perennial bedding plants in our greenhouses at our farm. Nearly 10,000 vegetable, herb, and flower seedlings are started from seed and nurtured in our greenhouses each spring. The total production area of our greenhouses is under 1 acre.

Two years ago we became the first Pizza Farm in the Lake Superior Region, hosting farm-to-table Pizza Nights at our farm during the summer months. Last year, we served wood-fired pizzas to nearly 3,000 happy attendees at the farm for this new agritourism enterprise.

2025 marks the 11th anniversary of our farm. We are farmers in every sense of the word. We participate in USDA farm programs such as the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives (EQIP) Program, and the Conservation Stewardship (CSP) Program, and we are a Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certified farm. We have filed a Schedule F for the past 9 years, and during that time the farm has provided the majority of our livelihood.

We've tried to apply for the Ag Homestead Classification, but because our production area is under 10 contiguous acres we do not qualify. Because of the way the laws are written, our greenhouse operation also does not qualify us for this program.

Participation in this program would provide a significant adjustment to our tax burden and allow us to continue doing what we do best: growing good food and feeding our community!

Thank you for your consideration in helping small family farms like ours succeed!

Emily & John Beaton Fairhaven Farm

**Hannah Bernhardt**

68393 Scotch Pine Rd.  
Finlayson, MN 55735  
(612) 483-5121  
hannah@medicinecreekfarm.com



March 25, 2025

Chair Gomez  
Members, House Taxes Committee

Dear Chair Gomez and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing to express my strong support for Rep. Her's bill to modify the definition of agricultural land for agricultural property classification (HF1522). I own and operate Medicine Creek Farm in Pine County. I raise grass fed beef and lamb and pastured pork, and direct market all my products to customers primarily in the Twin Cities and Duluth. I am an active member of the National Young Farmers Coalition, the Land Stewardship Project, and the Minnesota Farmers Union.

Even as a fourth generation farmer, land access was difficult for me. In my land search, I found that most homesteads had been parceled off from the surrounding agricultural land, so I could either buy a larger acreage with no home in which to live, or a small farmstead with a house and infrastructure, but not much land on which to farm. Most beginning farmers aren't lucky enough to have the time or skills to build their own homes or the access to capital to afford large amounts of prime farmland.

In the [Building a Future with Farmers 2022 Report from the National Young Farmer Survey](#), finding affordable farmland was the top challenge for respondents, followed by access to capital. We are piecing our farms together with sweat equity, relationships, ingenuity, and untraditional living quarters. We are growing direct-to-market to control our own prices, feed our communities, and live our values. We are farming in partnerships and cooperatives, in unconventional settings, on small parcels. We are not the exception, but a common result of skyrocketing land prices in a consolidated industry with lenders that see farming as too risky to finance.

Modifying the agricultural property classification to include small farmers on parcels less than 10 acres is tax fairness for young and beginning farmers. I appreciate your consideration of this proposal and thank Rep. Her for their leadership as well as the Committee's work on behalf of Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah K. Bernhardt".

Hannah K. Bernhardt



**Dr. Valentine Cadieux**

Learning Coordinator, Twin Cities Community Agricultural Land Trust  
Director of the Center for Justice and Law, Hamline University

**Date:** March 25, 2025

**Subject:** Letter of Support for revision of statute 273.13, subdivision 23, on Agricultural classification of land

Many urban and near-urban farmers, and many farmers who do not inherit generational farms that qualify for agricultural land clarification by being larger than 10 acres, have been kept from qualifying for supports such as the Green Acres tax program that helps preserve land in farming and support farmers.

In our work with farmers, land access and tenure are consistently the most significant problems -- and maintaining tenure to land for farming while paying commercial land taxes is a major reason many farmers can't make their operations work. This revision helps provide a pathway for serious market farmers to qualify for the supports already available to farmers with more land.

This could help preserve and encourage more small farms, and provide the "starter home" equivalent for farmland for many farmers.

Sincerely,

K. Valentine Cadieux

Twin Cities Community Agricultural Land Trust  
tcalt.org, PO Box 21004 Minneapolis, MN 55421



**THE GOOD ACRE**  
FOOD + COMMUNITY

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Co-Chair Aisha Gomez  
Co-Chair Greg Davids  
House Tax Committee  
Capitol, Room 120  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs and members of the committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for HF1522, which ensures fair and equitable agricultural property classification for all farmers, regardless of acreage. As Minnesota's largest nonprofit food hub, The Good Acre works with over 140 small farmers and producers, generating more than \$2 million in sales, with 78% of that produce coming from farmers of color. Through this lens, we recognize that agricultural land comes in all sizes, and specialty crop farmers—especially those growing on smaller parcels—play a critical role in local and regional food security.

In 2022, nearly 90% of the \$1.38 million in produce sourced through our hub came from farmers operating on 10 acres or less. These farmers grow fresh, unprocessed food that nourishes our communities, yet current tax classifications do not fairly reflect their contributions.

As climate change threatens food production, expanding regional food systems is essential for long-term sustainability and food security. This bill is a crucial step in removing barriers that prevent small and specialty crop farmers from accessing fair property classification, ensuring that more farmers can grow more food for our communities.

I urge you to support HF1522 and stand with Minnesota's farmers in strengthening our agricultural future. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Theresa McCormick  
Executive Director  
The Good Acre  
[nikki@thegoodacre.org](mailto:nikki@thegoodacre.org)

