

Chair Anne Rest
MN Senate Tax Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Testimony in support of SF4828 from Fairhaven Farm

Dear Chair Rest and Committee members:

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.

Last year 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.

2024 marks the 10th 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 consideration in helping small family farms like ours succeed!

Emily & John Beaton
Fairhaven Farm