



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

February 18, 2025

Chair Ann Rest
Senate Tax Committee
328 Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Rest and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write to share our support for Senator Putnam and Senator Hauschild's proposals to increase funding for Soil Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) (SF819; SF1089). Stable, long-term funding for SWCDs helps them best assist our family farmer members in meeting their on-farm conservation goals and increasing climate resilience.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities since 1918. Conserving our soil and water for future generations is central to the long-term sustainability of our members' farms. SWCDs serve as their trusted, local, boots-on-the-ground partners in this important work, providing direct technical assistance, demonstrating new practices, and connecting with state and federal resources. That's why our members voted to adopt a resolution in support of increased, general fund support for SWCDs.

In response to challenges like unpredictable weather, wet springs, and persistent droughts, our members are continually working to improve their operations, adopting new practices that make them more resilient and promote soil health and water quality. Consistent and reliable funding for SWCDs is a foundational step toward helping our members achieve these important goals, benefiting both their individual operations and the entire state.

We appreciate your consideration of additional funding for SWCDs. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047. Thank you for considering the needs and perspectives of Minnesota's farm families.

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