



The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) is a state agency mandated to advise and inform the Governor's Office, Legislative branch and stakeholders on matters of importance to Minnesota Latinos.

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Housing Finance

Date: Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>

MCLA supports SF236 – A bill relating to capital investment; appropriating money for the Rural Finance Authority; authorizing the sale and issuance of state bonds – because the bill proposes agriculture and capital investment initiatives that will help Minnesota farmers.

The bill will also help the many Minnesota Latinos who make their living in farming and agriculture. As today's farmers' age into retirement, it is important that younger cohorts of workers have the resources in place to help them succeed.

### **Research:**

According to Minnesota House Research and the State Demographic Center, often cited barriers to entry and success in farming include difficulty obtaining loans and other credit.<sup>1</sup>

Today's average Minnesota farmer is 55 years old.<sup>2</sup> However, Minnesota Latinos are much younger with a median age of 24, and in prime position to enter the workforce.<sup>3</sup> The Center for Rural Policy and Development published a report stating that Minnesota's growing immigrant population can restore the dwindling population of today's farmers.<sup>4</sup>

The Census of Agriculture estimates that there are 339 Latino principal farm operators in the state.<sup>5</sup> Along with this, agriculture and farming are sectors in which the Minnesota Latino population has a sizeable presence.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Colbey Sullivan and Michael Peterson, (2015) "The Minnesota Farmer: Demographic Trends and Relevant Laws". House Research & State Demographic Center

<sup>2</sup> Colbey Sullivan and Michael Peterson, (2015)

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey, (2011-2015)

<sup>4</sup> Thaddeus McCamant, (2014). "Educational Interests, Needs and Learning Preferences of Immigrant Farmers". Center for Rural Policy and Development

<sup>5</sup> Census of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, (2012)

<sup>6</sup> American Community Survey, (2011-2015)