

February 7, 2022

**To:** The Minnesota Senate Committee on Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development

**Re:** Supporting value chain businesses advancing Continuous Living Cover agriculture (SF1353)

Dear Chair Putnam and committee members,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our strong support for (SF1353) which would advance the development of Minnesota businesses focused on Continuous Living Cover (CLC) agriculture. We imagine a future close at hand when these companies rise as 21st-century leaders in Minnesota's agriculture and food sector, expanding options for Minnesota growers while supporting profitability, sustainability, and resilience.

Market-based CLC agriculture combines the excellent conservation outcomes of natural landscapes—such as prairie and woodland ecosystems—with the profitability of high-demand crops and diverse revenue streams.

State-supported basic research as well as grassroots innovation have brought new CLC crops and cropping systems to the cusp of commercial launch and scaling. These crops and cropping systems include Kernza Perennial Grain, hybrid hazelnuts, winter camelina, and elderberries, among others. Private companies and government agencies are increasingly turning to the agriculture sector for innovative ways to meet their environmental commitments, and CLC crops are perfectly suited to meet this new demand.

Minnesota is home to a growing cadre of new CLC-oriented businesses taking CLC innovations to market. A number of these businesses are led by or involve new and beginning farmers, BIPOC individuals and communities, and young entrepreneurs dedicating their lives to a profitable, sustainable, resilient agriculture sector in Minnesota. Similar to long-running State investments in renewable energy, dedicated State investment is needed and warranted to accelerate the supply chains and markets that will support expanded production of CLC crops and begin realizing these systems' public benefits at scale.

The Legislature made a pilot-scale investment of \$500,000 in this program last year, but the need far outstrips the resources currently available. SF1353 would accelerate the development of CLC value chains by strategically investing in companies poised for commercial breakthrough, delivering significant public benefits to Minnesotans and further solidifying Minnesota as a national and international leader in 21st century agricultural innovation.

Public investment now will spur further innovation and private investment, creating new economic and community development opportunities for our state while also protecting soil, water, biodiversity, and climate.

We urge you to support this important measure during the 2023 legislative session.

Sincerely,

Albert Lea Seed  
Conservation Minnesota  
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)  
Fountain Ark Farms  
Friends of the Mississippi River  
Great River Greening  
Harvest Nation Inc.  
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance  
Land Stewardship Project  
League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region ILO  
League of Women Voters Minnesota  
Mad Agriculture  
Midwest Elderberry Cooperative  
Minnesota Environmental Partnership  
Minnesota Rural Water Association  
Perennial Promise Growers Cooperative  
Regenerative Agriculture Alliance  
Region Five Development Commission  
Rural Advantage  
Sustainable Farming Association  
The Land Institute  
True Vine Specialty Farms  
Veterans Farming Initiative  
Vote Climate  
West Central Initiative  
Yield10 Bioscience