



For Immediate Release:  
April 7, 2017

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### **MFU applauds passage of ditch mowing legislation**

ST. PAUL (April 7, 2017) – Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) today applauded the signature of Senate File 218 by Governor Mark Dayton that implements a moratorium on the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) in enforcing permits until April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 for mowing and baling in right of way on trunk highways, except for land that adjoins state land.

MFU had raised concerns with the new permit system MNDOT had announced in December of 2016, that many farmers saw as unnecessary, confusing and burdensome. “Mowing roadsides has been an important source of forage for farmers, controls weeds and improves visibility on highways” said MFU President Gary Wertish. The legislation will give all parties a chance to get together and address issues, “MFU encourages farmers to pay attention to this issue over the interim and be involved in making their voice heard on this issue” added Wertish.

Under the legislation, MNDOT will recommend to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over transportation, agriculture, and natural resources that there be an establishment of a permit or notification system to mow or hay in trunk highway right-of-way. The recommendation must be developed with input from agriculture and environmental groups. The recommendation must contain at least the following elements:

- (1) ease of permit application or notification;
- (2) frequency of permits or notifications;
- (3) priority given to the owner or occupant of private land adjacent to a trunk highway right-of-way;
- (4) determination of authority to mow or hay in trunk highway right-of-way in which adjacent land is under the jurisdiction of the state or a political subdivision; and
- (5) recognition of the differences in the abundance of wildlife habitat based on geographic distribution throughout the state.

MFU thanks Rep. Chris Swedzinski (R-Ghent) and Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls) for their work as chief authors of this legislation.

*Minnesota Farmers Union—Standing for Agriculture, Fighting for Farmers*  
([www.mfu.org](http://www.mfu.org)).

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