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February 2, 2021

Chair Bill Weber  
Taxes – Subcommittee on Property Taxes  
2109 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Weber and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write share my support for working to provide property tax relief for farmers on acres that are held in riparian buffers. A tax exemption on those acres would be meaningful to many family farmers and would reflect that those acres held in buffers are no longer available for profitable production.

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota’s family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. Our family farmer members care deeply about caring for our soil, water, and other natural resources—and recognize that responsibly managing those resources is central to the long-term sustainability of their farms. Similarly, profitable management is needed for farms to survive into the next generation.

Particularly for small and mid-sized producers who operate on low margins, losing productive acres to riparian buffers presented a financial challenge—particularly when they are still paying agricultural property tax rates on those acres. Providing an exemption or other relief would recognize farmers for their compliance with the buffer law and help improve their financial footing.

I appreciate your consideration and thank Senator Draheim for his leadership on this issue. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at [stu@mfu.org](mailto:stu@mfu.org) or (320) 232-2047 (C). Thank you for your work on behalf of farmers and all Minnesotans.

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

CC: Senator Rich Draheim