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February 25, 2021

Chair David Senjem
Senate Committee on Energy and Utilities Finance and Policy
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3401
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Senjem and members of the committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU), I write in opposition to repealing the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) (SF 992).

MFU is a grassroots organization that has represented Minnesota's family farmers, ranchers and rural communities since 1918. Family farmers, just like any other business owner, are always looking for ways to save money and improve their bottom line, through upgrades to energy efficient equipment in both their home and farm operation.

Since 2007, the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) has been an important tool to help farmers make energy efficiency and conservation investments, which they otherwise might not make. Installing energy efficient equipment, such as LED lights in barns, geothermal in homes, or high efficiency chillers in dairy barns, leads to reduced energy use and financial savings for farmers over the long term. The cheapest energy is the energy not used, and CIP allows farmers to make investments to conserve energy, lower their bills, and improve their homes or farms.

For example, one of our members installed LED lights on their farm and geothermal in their home. They would not have been able to make the investment in these upgrades without the rebates from their rural electric association.

Repealing CIP would disadvantage our members, making them less able to invest in cost- and energy-saving upgrades for their homes and farms. If you have any questions, please contact our Government Relations Director, Stu Lourey, at stu@mfu.org or (320) 232-2047 (C). 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 style with a large, looped "G" and "W".

Gary Wertish
President, Minnesota Farmers Union

CC: Senator Andrew Matthews