

FY 2027 – HILARY MARTIN

My name is Hilary Martin. I live in Burlington, where I co-own and manage Diggers' Mirth Collective Farm, a small organic vegetable farm in the Intervale.

I want to thank the committee for taking the time to read my comments in support of the Farm Security Farm—I am humbly asking for a \$15.6 million appropriation in FY2027 for the Farm and Forest Operations Security Special Fund.

On July 11 of both 2023 and 2024, our farm was completely inundated after sudden heavy rains. Twice in a row, we experienced total crop loss. Both times, we were grateful to receive swift financial relief from the state, (through BEGAP), and from fundraising from our community. Both times we received very minimal relief from the federal government, despite our registration with the FSA and many hours of paperwork. The financial assistance from the state and our community allowed us to retain our crew, clean up, replant, and have a productive and profitable fall season. After the 2023 flood, and again after the 2024 flood, we made adjustments to our business plan to help mitigate future losses from flooding. We have cut back our crop plan and are focused more on our most profitable crops, so that a total loss is less devastating to us. We are figuring out how to invest more in farm tools and inputs in the years when we don't flood, so that when we do flood we can be more lean. In the past ten years especially, we have learned countless lessons and workarounds for extreme and unpredictable weather like heavy rains, temperatures in the 90s, and drought—often investing in new tools, inputs, more expensive seed varieties. We are used to flexing with the weather.

I believe in the farmers of our state! Moving forward, we must continue to increase the resilience of our local food system, even, or *especially* as climate change throws us these curveballs. But it is not sustainable for farmers alone to carry the financial risk. Please appropriate \$15.6 million in FY2027 for the Farm and Forest Operations Security Special Fund.

Thank you so much for considering my request.

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