



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

May 12, 2017

The Honorable Michelle L. Fischbach
President of the Senate
Room 2113, Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue W.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Madam President:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter 41, Senate File 780, a bill related to agriculture finance.

In my budget, I invested \$9.940 million in general funds and \$2.564 million in dedicated funds in the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. These investments are necessary for the Department to carry out its mission of ensuring the integrity of our food supply, the health of our environment, and the strength of our agricultural economy. This bill includes \$0 in additional investment.

The flexibility in the Agriculture Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Program has allowed the MDA to respond to the needs of Minnesota's agricultural sector at the speed of business and to take advantage of unique opportunities to leverage funds from other sources. This bill, unfortunately, earmarks 88 percent of the AGRI funding, restricting the department's ability to respond to the needs of Minnesota's agricultural industry.

I am further disappointed that you have included language that places the agency in conflict with federal law and strips the agency of existing pesticide enforcement authority. The verification of need language is untenable because it conflicts with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Under FIFRA, the label is the law and if a pesticide label requires verification of need prior to use, then the State must also require verification as part of its enforcement authority. I will not sign into law any provision that rolls back the Department of Agriculture's existing pesticide enforcement authority.

Agriculture is not a partisan issue—all Minnesotans want a strong agricultural industry—and the Agriculture Omnibus Finance bill provides an opportunity for us to work together and make commonsense investments that support our farmers and ensure the growth of our agricultural economy. Your proposal makes no investment in agriculture which will negatively impact the competitiveness of this important industry in our state.

Two days ago, I presented the legislature with my second proposal for a compromise agriculture budget. This proposal called for an additional \$4.970 million in funding and meets the legislature half way between my original proposal and your targets. As you will recall, my proposal included the following items:

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- Operating adjustments for the Department of Agriculture, Board of Animal Health and Agricultural Utilization Research Institute
- Establishment of an MDA Pollinator Protection Account, focused on pesticide research and education, supported by General Funds and a Pollinator Protection Fee
- The creation of a Certificate of Free Sale Account
- An increase of the Waste Pesticide Collection Fee

My administration has consistently met with your Agriculture Finance Chairs to outline concerns about the lack of investment in this bill. I urge legislative leaders to immediately rejoin the end of session negotiations and develop an agriculture finance bill that appropriately invests in agriculture and can gain my support.

I remain confident that we can work out these differences and end the legislative session on time. The people of Minnesota expect that we work together to keep our state competitive.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Dayton". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Senator Paul E. Gazelka, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Thomas M. Bakk, Senate Minority Leader
Senator Torrey N. Westrom, Senate
Representative Kurt Daudt, Speaker of the House
Representative Melissa Hortman, House Minority Leader
Representative Rod Hamilton, House
The Honorable Steve Simon, Secretary of State
Mr. Cal R. Ludeman, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Patrick Murphy, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives
Mr. Paul Marinac, Revisor of Statutes