



State Representative  
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## *Dear Neighbors,*

The 2017 Legislative Session will go down as one of the most productive in recent history. It took bipartisan compromise in order to get things done that benefit all Minnesotans. We successfully delivered the largest tax relief package in nearly two decades and the largest investment in roads and bridge infrastructure in state history without a gas tax increase.

I am personally proud of legislation I authored that provides post-secondary scholarships to students going into high demand fields like advanced manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, and agriculture, as well as legislation that provides grants for manufacturers to work with high schools in order to establish apprenticeships for student workers.

The most rewarding aspect of serving our community in St. Paul has been meeting and interacting with constituents. I look forward to continuing to serve the people of Goodhue & Wabasha County as we look ahead to the 2018 Session.

*Barb*

## HEALTH CARE




**Emergency Premium Aid & Access:** House Republicans acted quickly to provide a 25 percent health insurance premium rebate and ensure continued access to doctors for patients receiving life-saving treatment.



**Lowering Costs, Increasing Choices:** A suite of reforms passed by House Republicans provides more affordable options for small businesses and their employees, protects consumers from unfair billing practices, and allows organizations with member owners -- such as farm cooperatives -- to provide health insurance to their members. Furthermore, a new reinsurance law brings Minnesota closer to its pre-Obamacare system, where the relatively small pool of individuals and families who buy insurance on their own are not left to bear the cost of high risk individuals.

## TAX RELIEF

It's been nearly two decades since Minnesotans have received meaningful tax relief. The 2017 Tax Relief bill, championed by House Republicans, delivers \$650 million in tax relief to Minnesota families over the next two years, and \$790 million in 2020-2021.

 Nearly 284,000 senior citizen tax returns (single and married filing jointly) will receive tax reductions; 72,000 of those will no longer pay state income tax on their social security benefits.



A family of four making \$50,000 a year will receive an additional \$1,200 toward their child care expenses.



65,000 students will receive an average of a \$414 reduction in their taxes through a new tax credit for student loan payments.



240,000 farmers will receive property tax relief to reduce their disproportionate share of school district debt service.

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



To increase safety and reduce traffic congestion, House Republicans prioritized fixing roads and bridges Minnesotans use every day. This session, lawmakers successfully defeated the governor's gas tax hike, and instead invested a historic level of existing funds into our transportation infrastructure statewide.



**Local Aid to Fix Roads:** A more than \$300 million influx of funding for roads over two years, with an additional \$16 million for small cities' road projects. Over the next four years, Goodhue and Wabasha County will receive over \$3 million in increased funding. Red Wing, Lake City, Bellechester, Goodhue, Wabasha, and Cannon Falls will receive almost \$500,000 in new local street aid.



**Bridges:** An additional 97 bridges will be repaired or replaced statewide as a result of \$25 million in funds for a new local bridge account.



**Bonding:** I was able to secure funding within the bonding bill for some very important projects in need of completion within our community: a new rail grade overpass for Sturgeon Lake Road, Port Authority improvements, as well as levy wall enhancements and further restoration of the Sheldon Theater.

## EDUCATION



**The Pioneer Press** hailed House Republican efforts as "one of the biggest reforms to state education policy in recent history."

The K-12 Education Budget partners more than \$1.3 billion of increased funding with proven reforms including:

- Ending the "Last In, First Out" default layoff policy for schools to keep the best teachers in the classroom.
- Investing in proven early education programming like pre-K scholarships and school readiness.
- Overhauling the broken teacher licensure system to help hire more teachers to address the shortage.



**Funding Our Local Schools:** Our school districts will see more than \$5 million in new per-pupil funding which means more dollars in the classroom for our students and teachers.

## NEW LAWS WITH AN EVERYDAY IMPACT



**Real ID:** A Real ID-compliance law enables Minnesotans to use a state-issued ID to board an airplane or enter a federal facility.



**Internet Investments:** A new small cell technology initiative will bring 5G wireless internet to Minnesota—100x faster than the current 4G service. The Legislature also provided \$20 million in new grant funding to bring increased broadband internet access to Greater Minnesota.



**Sunday Sales:** The repeal of an outdated law allows Minnesotans to purchase beer, wine and spirits on Sunday effective July 1st.

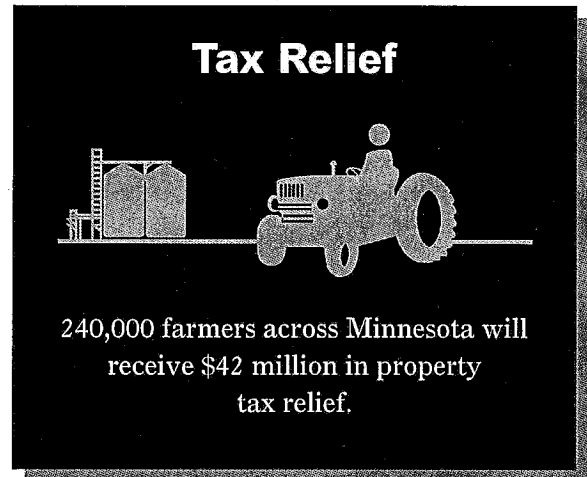


# Agriculture News

## Tax Reform for Farmers

Farmers pay a disproportionate share of school construction levies making it difficult for schools to pass referendums. A major feature in House Republicans' Tax Relief bill is property tax relief for farmers and landowners to offset the unfair burden borne by agriculture land owners for school construction levy costs.

The single-largest provision in the tax relief package reduces the state tax on social security income by increasing the income limit thresholds for taxation. Under this proposal, nearly 284,000 senior citizens' tax returns (single and married filing jointly) would be eligible to receive a tax exemption on their social security benefits. Additionally, farm families will benefit from a measure conforming the state death tax (also known as the Estate Tax) to the federal exclusion.



**Tax Relief**

240,000 farmers across Minnesota will receive \$42 million in property tax relief.

## Agricultural Investments

- House Republicans stand beside farmers and their budget prioritizes the needs of the ag community including:
- ✓ **Prioritizing farm safety and the prevention of crop and livestock diseases.** The House Republican budget continues the tractor rollover prevention program that makes older farm equipment safer, aims to stop the spread of noxious weeds including Palmer amaranth, and works to prevent the next Avian Flu outbreak.
  - ✓ **Recruiting the next generation of farmers and ag-innovators.** Careers in agriculture are often overlooked by young people today due to a lack of first-hand experience and understanding of what options are available. The House Republican budget commits needed funding for ag production, ag education, and youth programs.
  - ✓ **Halting the decline of pollinators and restoring their populations.** In consultation with researchers at the University of Minnesota, House Republicans are working to create a new dedicated Pollinator Habitat Research account. This funding will enable the scientific community to perform research in order to establish what beneficial pollination habitat should be planted.

## Ditch Mowing & Rural Finance Authority

In November 2016, MnDOT announced a new permit policy for mowing and baling hay along Minnesota's state roadways. MnDOT acted via an administrative rule, without input from local landowners or legislators, resulting in significant outcry from the agricultural community.

House Republicans worked with stakeholders to convince Governor Dayton to put a moratorium on MnDOT's new policy, and implemented a new law giving policymakers time to craft a ditch mowing policy that respects property owners and prevents future government overreach.

State authorization to sell bonds for the Rural Finance Authority (RFA) loan program expired on December 31, 2016. House Republicans worked quickly this year to pass legislation into law building up \$35 million in funds for the program in an effort to better assist farmers with low cost financing. RFA uses bond funds to offer loans within the beginning farmer loan and seller assisted program, agricultural improvement program, debt restructuring program, and livestock expansion programs.

**Questions? Contact your representative at [bit.ly/MNHouseRep](http://bit.ly/MNHouseRep)**

# Update on Buffers

Farmers are justifiably frustrated with how the Dayton Administration has implemented its new buffer policy. House Republicans have worked to clarify our state's buffer laws to make them fairer for farmers, landowners, counties, and watershed districts. In particular, existing buffer deadlines were proving to be unworkable, and House Republicans have worked with farmers to give them more time to comply with these new requirements.

☞ **The legislature needs to deal with it. And I've said to both of them emphatically, I will not negotiate a buffer bill for this session. I'm not going to agree to any changes.** ☞

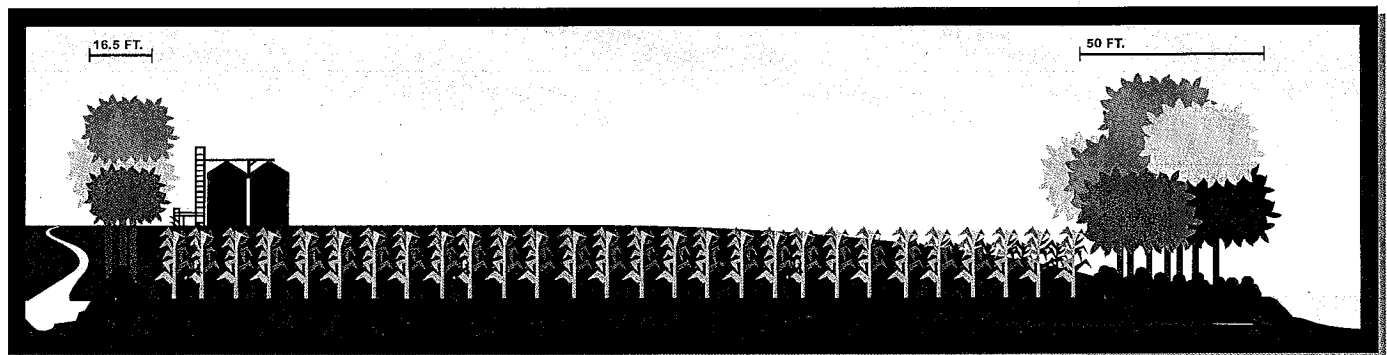
- Governor Dayton, April 26, 2017  
Contact: Mark.Dayton@state.mn.us

While Governor Dayton's resistance to making changes to the buffer law was discouraging, House Republicans know this is a major issue for farmers and successfully fought for changes this legislative session.

## Buffer Reforms

House Republicans successfully made the following technical and substantive changes to the buffer law.

- ✓ **Deadline Waiver:** A temporary waiver for up to 8 months, available through local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) will be available for those not able to comply with the November 1, 2017 deadline for buffer installation on public waters.
- ✓ **Alternative Practices:** SWCDs will now be able to approve alternative practices based on local conditions.
- ✓ **Cost Share:** \$5 million from the Clean Water Fund will be available through SWCDs for landowners interested in technical or financial assistance to establish buffers or alternative practices.
- ✓ **Seed Mixes:** To prevent the spread of palmer amaranth or other noxious weeds, seed mixes must follow Minnesota's current seed verification process.
- ✓ **Definition of Public Waters:** The definition of "public waters" was narrowed for purposes of the buffer law to be ONLY waters designated in the last Public Waters Inventory (PWI) update. Existing law pointed to a much broader definition of "public waters" and this change clarifies the intent of the 2015 agreement.



Private ditches and public waters without shoreland classification.

Public waters with shoreland classification.