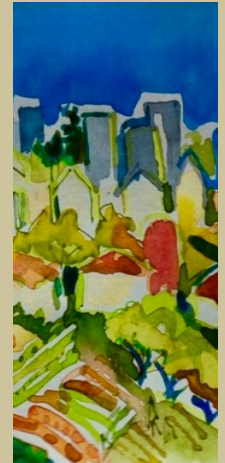


Headwaters Community Food & Water Bill

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Anchoring every community with a regenerative food economy designed for sustainable living



No matter where we live or heritage we claim, we all depend on water. Water *is* Life.

As the headwaters for three major watersheds, Minnesota is positioned to be a leader in caring for water. As our communities make plans to live sustainably, this leadership has never been more important.

Yet, today Minnesota's economy-every community within her borders- remains dependent on the industrial food chain. From source to table, this publicly funded economy is unsustainable-depending on practices that contaminate and destroy ecosystems and contribute to greenhouse gases. *We need an economic solution to this economic problem.*

The good news is that we know what we need to do. Building on the knowledge, skills and foods generated by indigenous communities for thousands of years, we can meet the demands of water & food and climate with regenerative economies designed to connect urban and rural communities to a common purpose-neighbors caring for one another and the home we share.

The **Headwaters Community Food & Water Bill** provides the economic infrastructure (public investment and policies) to launch local economic development that:

- Anchors every local economy in regenerative food system (food web)
- Restores the ecological foundation for sustainable living and capture carbon
- Establishes and maintains effective partnerships between rural and urban communities
- Rewards practices that help communities live sustainably and nurture well-being

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- Nurtures the current and next generations of regenerative food leaders (source to table)
- Provides an economic legacy capable of sustaining this and future generations

Our common challenges offer an opportunity to work together as neighbors to care for one another and home we share. The **Headwaters Community Food & Water Bill** makes the pathway to success visible.

Why This Bill is Needed

Every community shares the risks and responsibility to organize economies that sustain life and vitality of ecosystems. Right now, communities do not have the economic tools they need to care for themselves and the planet.

Public resources are tied up in the industrial food chain-the very industry whose success depends on practices that create greenhouse gases, food and water scarcity, soil and water contamination and biodiversity destruction. Urban and rural communities alike are currently dependent on an economy that is unsustainable.

Communities cannot afford to remain dependent on an economic system that erodes the ecological infrastructure for sustaining life. It is time to align local, county and state and federal resources/investments to anchor every local economy with a regenerative food system capable of serving the needs of this and future generations.

With clean water and healthy communities as common goals, urban and rural communities can leverage their needs to invest public dollars to set a course for success.

Where We Are Now

There are three things fuel the current publicly funded food economy:

- Billions of public dollars (annual subsidies)
- Public policy (as defined by the Farm Bill)
- Trade arrangements (crafted to create markets for the products the industry produces)

Together these provide a powerful combination of tools.

With this set of tools, the industrial food chain and its products are advanced across the nation and internationally. This dynamic presents both a challenge and an opportunity. We have a publicly funded food economy-just not the one that we need. Urban and rural communities need to respond with a shared vision for a regenerative food economy and work to implement that vision together.

Where We Need to Be

The good news is that we know what we need to do. Building on the knowledge and skills generated by indigenous communities for thousands of years, we can meet the demands of climate and food & water with vibrant regenerative food systems operating as the bedrock of every local community. To achieve this goal, we need a combination of:

- An economic infrastructure capable of supporting a food web from source to table and
- An ecological infrastructure comprised of healthy local ecosystems

With ecosystems restored to health and food produced regeneratively, together communities can meet operate as engines for sustainable living.

What This Bill Does: Set a Course for Success

The HEADWATERS BILL creates the Headwaters Community Food and Water Economic Resiliency Program that provides a comprehensive economic infrastructure (public investment and policies) to launch local economic development to :

- Anchors every local economy in a regenerative food web
- Restores ecological foundation for sustainable living and carbon capture
- Establishes and maintains effective partnership networks between urban and rural communities
- Rewards practices that help communities live sustainably and nurture well-being of its members
- Nurtures the current and the next generations of regenerative food leaders (source to table)
- Provides an economic foundation/legacy capable of sustaining this and future generations

Planning for Success:

1. Anchor Every Community with a Regenerative Food Economy

This bill envisions local economies participating in and benefiting from robust, publicly funded regenerative food economy (food web) designed to be integral to the overall success of each community and characterized by effective partnerships between urban and rural communities operating from a shared set goals for sustainable living. Modeled after the approach of indigenous communities who organized their economy to recognize the interdependent relationship of people and Nature, the proposed food web will depend on

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healthy ecosystems to ensure food and water security, foster collaboration and generate local ecological knowledge for managing the challenges of climate.

To achieve this vision, the bill proposes an economic development investment to launch and maintain the economic system outlined in the bill. Additionally, the bill proposes providing economic infrastructure to support every component of the food web including local and regional partnerships necessary to support its operations. (see outline for infrastructure below)

The Regenerative Food Web

- A decentralized, coordinated system for managing every component of the food economy from source to table year-round. Members of this web include all those employed within the system.
- System management for food: generating sources, tracking harvests, preservation, preparation, delivery, serving, storage, composting and emergency preparedness and management
- Provides for full participation and benefit of every member of every community (Food and water are human rights)
- Organized to capture food and carbon where it is generated (cultivated and wild harvests), preserve it effectively, deliver to communities in their neighborhoods efficiently, regenerate the health of ecosystems (including people) and eliminate waste with effective use of reusable containers
- Organized to foster a culture of caring and awareness of the interdependent relationship of people and Nature

Components of the Food Web Economy

The food web includes:

- Sources of cultivated (urban and rural farms, orchards, public lands, community gardens, water systems and wild foods (public waters, public lands, private lands)
- Neighborhood Food Hub (Neighborhood Commons) and satellites (see document)
- Management system for managing the complexity of generating sources, capturing wild and cultivated sources, harvesting, preserving and preparing and delivery that serves the needs of communities every day (see document)
- Valued and highly-skilled custodians of culinary knowledge (preparation, preservation)

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- Learning centers, leadership training for regenerative systems
- Coordinated network for managing and preparing for emergencies
- Map of all the component parts of the system
- Decentralized, coordinated research of all elements of local ecological knowledge

Economic infrastructure: source to table

A successful food web economy will require an economic infrastructure to ensure that all of the component parts of the system operate as a team. This bill provides strategic investments to create and maintain the system effectively.

Source-Producers

Currently, we have a patchwork of local, small-scale producers of who depend on healthy ecosystems to produce food. They face similar barriers to success.

- They receive no automatic public subsidy for their work or their products.
- Staples of a healthy diet-fruits, vegetables, meat produced in animal-specific habitats are not subsidized
- Must create a customer base for their goods and charge enough to make a living
- Grants from the USDA offered to support local initiatives are inadequate and farmers and businesses must compete against one another to receive them. Only 1 in 4 who submit a grant proposal receive funding.
- Land is prohibitively expensive and difficult to obtain and finance
- Finding workers to work seasonally is challenging
- Few farms can afford to offer living wages and benefits and adequate housing

This bill provides a set of tools to overcome these barriers and create capacity for growing a network of small-scale producers capable of participating and benefiting as members of the food web.

For farmers **currently** engaging in organic, regenerative agriculture, investments would support their operations to develop:

- Research: on-site research system for capturing local ecological knowledge
- Seed and plant exchange (local and regional)
- Soil, water and pollinator economy-augmentation, restoration, landscaping

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- Aquifer restoration
- Ecosystem design planning for diversification and effective regenerative production
- Farm habitat-adequate facilities for personnel, staff, storage, delivery, production
- Leadership training and network facilitation
- 365 Local Food-year-round system for producing food including greenhouses, storage facilities
- Crop insurance
- Affordable healthcare and dental care provided by a single payer system to maximize benefits and minimize costs and waste

System management, food preparation, preservation, and delivery

A successful food web requires a well-coordinated system for managing the operations and skilled employees to manage food preparation, preservation and delivery. This bill provides strategic economic infrastructure to support these components.

One feature of the delivery system is a neighborhood-based food hub or commons. By locating food sources in neighborhoods, the food web provides access while avoiding waste and the problems created by packaging and long-distance transportation. Additionally, the delivery system is designed to manage and preserve harvests strategically by matching sources with preservation sites as well as businesses, schools, community centers, etc. (See Capture System document)

2. Headwaters Restoration

As the headwaters for three watersheds, Minnesota is positioned to take a leadership role in creating an economy capable of caring for the water that lives here and sustaining the life of communities within our borders and downstream.

To achieve these goals, we need a healthy ecological infrastructure. Healthy ecosystems are to water and food security what roads and bridges are to good transportation-absolutely essential. Currently, with local economies dependent on the industrial food chain the state's communities do not and cannot care the ecosystems. Resources must be directed to change this dynamic. This bill provides strategic investments that pair the restoration of ecosystems with local economic development designed to anchor communities in sustainable living. With communities located here in the headwaters operating successful local food webs and restoring ecosystems, communities downstream in every direction will benefit.

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Strategic investment in ecological infrastructure

We need to keep in mind that in our current economy, farmers are paid to participate in the industrial food chain. It is reasonable to conclude that they would not participate without a subsidy and a market created for their goods. To support goals for ecosystem restoration, this bill provides a pathway to participate in the regenerative food web by offering an annual income for two seasons to restore the farm landscape by planting cover crops to revive soil health depleted by chemical inputs.

During the period of restoration, farmers will be given options:

- An annual income during time when the land is recovering from chemical contamination
- Transition planning options (land transfer, division or reorganization for regenerative farming)
- Participate in planning for landscape restoration-perennial landscapes
- Participate in training for regenerative, diversified farming, participation in the food web

The purpose of this strategic investment is to ensure that ecosystem restoration results in a combination of healthy ecosystems, the addition of hundreds of small-scale farmers living thriving in rural communities and dependence on regenerative food economies.

The need to invest in ecological infrastructure is an opportunity to create capacity for sustainable living with strategic economic opportunity for rural communities. Regenerative operations will serve as sources for food and as sites within the web for the long term, holistic research needed to manage food and water security and climate change. Indigenous communities provide the model for this holistic approach to research-capturing and documenting local ecological knowledge and adapting to local conditions and climates.

This bill provides investments to conduct long term research on site across the food web to effectively track and utilize knowledge generated and restore biological diversity. Ecological infrastructure investments would support:

- Creating locally adapted perennial landscapes
- Comprehensive mapping system of restored landscapes and water systems
- Research (in situ) of beneficial microbes, plants, insects, pollinators, seed and plant diversity
- System for sharing and applying local ecological knowledge in planning (source to table)
- Soil restoration for carbon capture
- Community campaigns to engage imaginations and promote culture of care

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Establish effective partnerships between urban and rural communities

Establishing an effective food web will require team of leaders capable of providing an environment in which members can participate effectively to achieve common goals. This bill envisions a network of partnerships between members of the web working collaboratively to share information, analyze and evaluate the operations with care. This bill provides resources to create an effective team of leaders and a system for participating in the web to:

- Nurture culture capable of effective communication and responsive to feedback
- Create and maintain comprehensive system evaluations
- Organize opportunities to learn, connect and celebrate as communities
- Cultivate partnerships with communities across regions and borders
- Align comprehensive plans and economic development (cities and counties and states)

This set of leaders will be responsible for working in partnership with local government to manage issues related to system operations, resource management, building capacity for the food web and community organizing. The food web operates as a community resource to meet combined social, ecological and economic needs. Engaging communities effectively will play an important role in the work of the leaders.

Nurture leaders and leadership

Our communities need an economy capable of managing the challenges of food and water and climate today and for future generations. Learning the science and art of regenerative systems must be embedded in the food web. This bill provides investments to offer learning opportunities and apprenticeships in every part of the web's operations including:

- Training: current farmers, beginning farmers and youth
- The science and art of regenerative systems
- Training for culinary arts (all forms of food preparation and preservation)
- Coordinated system management, leadership skills and in situ research
- Community organizing and community learning and the arts

Provide an economic foundation capable of serving this and future generations

The purpose of this bill is to anchor every community's economy to a common purpose-providing a pathway to a future for sustainable living. Adapting to climate is not a new concept. The economic development outlined in the bill is modeled after the approach adopted by indigenous communities-an approach which allowed communities to thrive in challenging climates and conditions while generating foods, knowledge and skills that

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remain the foundation for our food security today. Today, we face a similar challenge and must have an economy designed to manage it successfully.

Rights for Nature

We cannot offer a foundation for the future without protecting the ecosystems that sustain life. In honor of the indigenous communities and all of the generations who are depending on us to care for our home, this bill provides resources to organize Rights for Nature. Under the current structure of law, Nature has no rights. She is treated as property. Natural systems sustain life, but they have no protection. It is legal to contaminate and destroy ecosystems. The interdependent relationship between people and Nature is the foundation for living sustainably. We need to provide legal rights for Nature *and* an economy designed to work in partnership with Nature.

What Success Looks Like

The story of food and the story of water share a timeless bond. No matter what passport we carry or heritage we claim, we are all connected to this story.

The next chapter in that story is ours to write.

The HEADWATERS COMMUNITY FOOD & WATER BILL envisions bold, pragmatic and transformative changes to our state's shared economic and ecological landscape to meet the challenges of food & water and climate successfully-aligning our public investments to provide every community with the tools they need to participate and benefit in a vibrant economy designed to nurture the health and well-being of all its members.

The vision outlines a combined set of economic, social and ecological goals to guide the creation of and measure the success of the proposed economy.

The work of pursuing and achieving this economic vision and cultivating the partnerships required to make it work will present their own challenge. We must believe that we are equal to the task and create environments capable of fostering dialogue and creativity. Our common needs and the future of all the generations to come depend on pursuing this vision together.

Neighborhood Food Hub

A Neighborhood Food Hub is like a public library for food – a resource available for everyone to participate in an economy designed to sustain life, depend on healthy ecosystems, and capture carbon. This includes:

- Partner
Center for local, regional, and international food economy partnerships.
- Community Table and Gathering Place
Dining, meeting spaces, classrooms.
- Food Center
Source of fresh, prepared, and preserved food.
- Learning Center
Permaculture, seed saving, and cultivation. Regenerative economies, soil ecology, composting, bee keeping.
- Community Kitchen
Food preparation, preservation (Drying, fermenting, pickling, bottling)
- Culinary Center
Teaching skills, food preservation, cooking, ethnic foods, recipe development.
- Center for Regenerative Research and Economic Sustainability.
- Storage and Distribution Site
- Community Economic Vision
Upstream economy.
- Urban Farm
Production, research
- Deep Winter Greenhouse
- Bee Hives
- Compost, Waste Management
- Connector to Local Community
Schools, community centers, faith communities, civic organizations, government.

Center for Regenerative Research and Economic Sustainability

Advance the success of locally-adapted food systems with holistic research and coordinated system for economic development from source to table.

Collect, analyze, evaluate, and share knowledge

- Local ecological knowledge (LEK)
- Seeds and plants
- Animal husbandry
- Generating food sources – cultivating, herding, grazing, fishing and hunting, and foraging
- Ecosystem restoration
- Energy generation/use
- Carbon capture – record, generation
- Water – capture, use, restoration practices
- Regenerative systems – food, composting, materials, reusable containers
- Sustainability practices and objectives – track, evaluate, share
- Systems analysis- financial assessment
- Ecological issues
- Emergency management and preparation
- Surplus – planning, distribution, uses (See food preservation)
- Partnerships – economic and cultural connections across regions and borders

Leadership

- NFH Director
- Kitchen Director and Staff
- Teaching staff (indoors, outdoors)
- Maintenance and Delivery Staff
- Research and Economic Sustainability Staff
- Coordinators – food sourcing and distribution (local to international)

REGENERATIVE FOOD WEB ECONOMY

Capture System (Source to Table) MAP

