



March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Katrina Kessler, Commissioner  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
520 Lafayette Road  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Region Five Development Commission Support of the State Minnesota's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Single Entity Proposal for Climate-Smart Food Systems (Award Number EPA-R-OAR-CPRGI-23-07)

Dear Commissioner Kessler,

I write to affirm that we Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) supports the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and other state agencies' suite of climate-smart food systems programs in your agency's single entity CPRG implementation grant proposal.

We are excited about this collaborative proposal because we all have a role to play in making Minnesota a national leader in climate-smart approaches to our food system. This proposal takes a visionary systems approach and capture multiple benefits while achieving significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions and carbon sequestration across all aspects of our food system. R5DC is a high-performing, federally designated Economic Development District committed to improving life for all people in Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena Counties in MN. R5DC is proud of our reputation as an action-oriented convener with experience in securing resources through authentic relationships that spur equitable economic ecosystems and honor environmental stewardship commitments in rural Central Minnesota communities.

R5DC is actively delivering federal and state resources to implement projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our rural region. Specifically, we are helping our rural towns develop climate resiliency plans and find funding to implement projects including, but not limited to, electrification, energy efficiencies, protection of natural resources, waste reduction, and more. Support from the EPA in this effort is essential to our rural community's success.

R5DC is excited to partner in this climate-smart food systems work because it aligns with the USDA-funded North Central Regional Food Business Center (NC-RFBC) objectives which R5DC began in 2023. The goal of NC-RFBC is to transform a region that primarily focuses on commodity and large-scale agriculture into an area that also supports smaller, more resilient farm and food practices, specifically focusing on the development of critical infrastructure for small and mid-size farms and helping them build sustainable systems. In particular, our organization can bring regional collaboration of our 33 Technical Assistance providers across three states to help bridge resources and assist with the objectives of the Climate-Smart Food Systems model.

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We are enthusiastic about the opportunity this proposal provides to advance our shared climate goals and the goals of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ambitious and vital CPRG program.  
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheryal Hills".

Cheryal Hills  
Executive Director  
Region Five Development Commission & NCEDA  
[chills@regionfive.org](mailto:chills@regionfive.org)

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