

320 14th Street, Cloquet, Minnesota 55720

January 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Cloquet Public Library in Cloquet, Minnesota.

We have recently become aware of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's enforcement action against the Duluth Seed Library. From information on the Seed Library website, we have learned that the Seed Library is in violation of state law as it relates to the sale of seed (New Minnesota Seed Law Minnesota Statutes, Sections 21.80-21.92).


The Seed Law Section 21.81 defines "sell" to include selling or transferring ownership; offering and exposing for sale, exchange, distribution, giving away, and transportation in or into this state; and having in possession with intent to sell, exchange, distribute, give away, or transport in or into this state.

As we understand it, the intended purpose of this law is to protect consumers who purchase inadequately or illegally labeled seed, and to promote fair competition. Yet compliance with the Minnesota Seed Law, as currently written, could result in the closure of the Duluth Seed Library and prevent farmers, gardeners, other seed libraries, schools and community organizations from engaging in interpersonal seed sharing—voluntary non-commercial activities.

Minnesota libraries were founded on the principle that the free exchange of knowledge and diverse ideas, without registration or regulation, is foundational to a healthy democracy. Seeds, like books, contain within them a record of the past and the wisdom of previous generations. We believe that, as such, seeds—like books—should be valued, preserved, and freely shared among the community.

We further believe that, though well intentioned, the Seed Law negatively impacts the future health of Minnesota by equating commercial and non-commercial seed activities. We are writing to share our support for changes to the Seed Law, such that the Law distinguishes between the sale and sharing of seeds, and supports the long legacy of unregulated interpersonal saving and sharing of seeds.

Sincerely,



**Cathy Rikkola, President
Cloquet Public Library Board of Directors**

The Cloquet Public
Library contributes
to a democratic
and engaged
community
by providing a
welcoming space,
stimulating
imagination,
and supporting
children's literacy.