



*FRIENDS of the*

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# Two Harbors Public Library

January 5, 2014

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is written on behalf of the Two Harbors Friends of the Library Board of Directors and membership. We wish to express our whole-hearted support for the Duluth Seed Library being offered by the Duluth Public Library. We urge the Minnesota Legislature to amend the Minnesota Seed Law to allow for its continued operation without the burden of labeling and germination testing currently required even of non-commercial and free exchanges.

Free exchange of seed via a seed library is in keeping both with our long-standing cultural practice of noncommercial sharing of locally and personally sourced seed and with the Duluth library's stated mission of enriching community life "by helping people... explore creative pursuits in a welcoming environment." All libraries promote the free exchange of ideas and our cultural heritage, and this practice is totally consistent with that purpose.

Having an open community exchange site such as the public library's makes the practice of seed sharing immeasurably more accessible and successful than relying solely on word of mouth and personal exchanges among friends. Seed sharing promotes local food security, healthy eating, biodiversity and preservation of locally adapted varieties of plants. But requiring the same labeling and germination testing requirements as commercial and industrial seed companies is inappropriate and prohibitive for a small scale community service such as the Duluth library's.

We trust our legislators will act to correct this inadvertent effect of the current law in the upcoming legislative session.

Respectfully,



Fran Kaliher, Secretary  
Two Harbors Friends of the Library



# Two Harbors Public Library

320 Waterfront Drive • Two Harbors, MN 55616 • 218-834-3148 • [thpl@arrowhead.lib.mn.us](mailto:thpl@arrowhead.lib.mn.us)

January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Trustees for the Two Harbors Public Library.

We have recently become aware about the recent Minnesota Department of Agriculture 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 ).

Moreover, that 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; (c) having in possession with intent to sell, exchange, distribute, give away, or transport in or into this state.

As we understand, the intended purpose of this law is to protect consumers who purchase seed from 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, all 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. As such, we believe that seeds, like books, should be valued, preserved, and freely shared among the community.

Though well intentioned, we believe 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 in the Seed Law, such that the Law distinguishes between the sale of seeds and supports the long legacy of unregulated interpersonal saving and sharing of seeds.

Sincerely,

Tracey Anderson

Board President