



# Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Intergovernmental Relations

**Date:** February 13, 2015

**To:** Chair Elizabeth Glidden and Vice Chair Alondra Cano

**Referral to:** Intergovernmental Relations

**Subject:** 2015 Legislative Policies

**Recommendation:** Amend the Environmental and Resource Protection Policies section of the 2015 Legislative Policies by adding at the end of the section the following:

**Support legislation that allows for interpersonal non-commercial seed sharing as well as the continued operation of seed libraries and exchanges operated by libraries, educational institutions and non-profit agencies.**

**Previous Directives:**

The legislative agenda and policies are amended during the legislative agenda to add items.

**Department Information**

Prepared by: IGR Staff

Approved by Gene Ranieri, IGR Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenters in Committee: IGR Staff

**Supporting Information**

Seed libraries/exchanges are a nonprofit depository of seed that can be used by the public. Seed libraries are located throughout the state including Duluth and Moorhead. The seed library/exchange distributes seeds that can be used to grow healthy food, preserve local seed varieties, and promote seed sharing. The seeds are usually provided free of charge or for a small fee.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) recently informed the Duluth Public Library that its seed exchange is in violation of the Minnesota Seed Law. The library is considered to be in violation of the law because it charges a small fee for the seeds which may not meet MDA labeling or testing standards. To permit the continuation of the seed libraries, the seed law could be amended to exempt literary and educational institutions that operate a seed library from the seed law or include conditions to allow continuation of the libraries.

Legislation (SF 143) has been introduced in the Senate that would authorize an exemption. The bill has not been heard and it does not have a House companion. Interested parties are meeting with the MDA and legislators to find resolution to the issue.