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LD 2013

As farmers we pour everything we have into our land. Our soil is our most important asset. We wait, with excitement, for our soil test results. We hope that the cover crops we planted before, after, or sometimes in place of a cash crop, have done their work to improve our soil health. We hope that amendments we have chosen, have undergone the alchemy in the soil that will make them available to the plants.

We feed the soil, that feeds the plants, that feeds the people.

It is hard mental work to make all the decisions that go into each farm's growing season- I won't go into the minutiae of seed selection, layout, spacing, bed preparation, management of pests/disease, safe food handling post harvest. I won't get into choosing where and for how much we sell our harvests. I won't get into the paperwork, or the financial gymnastics required just to get the privilege of starting a new season. Of course there is the actual hard physical labor of farming itself.

Why do it, right? Farmers do it because we love it. We love creating and managing a system. We love the miracle of watching a seed become food- food that feeds our families and our community. It is so worth it.

We can manage all the variable mentioned above, and we can also adjust to what Mother Nature throws our way. But contaminated soil is a challenge too great for even the best farmer to take on alone. It is too heavy a burden for anyone to face alone. In one fell swoop affected farmers are facing the loss of livelihood, while also having to contemplate whether they feel safe even staying on their land. Where will they get their drinking water? Has their health already been affected? Can they safely stay on their land? How will they make a living now? Who will buy their land if they need to leave?

The integrity and strength that affected farmers have already shown is astounding. They have provided an honorable template for the MANY farmers that will be affected. But this should not be their burden to bear. They need help navigating out of the situation that was created decades ago by state sanctioned spreading of industrial sludge/septage on agricultural land.

The assistance that LD 2013 offers is essential right now.