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Written Testimony

Hello. My name is Kathy Beyer and I am the Senior Vice President for Real Estate Development at [Evernorth](#). Evernorth works across the state of Vermont to build affordable rental housing in partnership with our regional nonprofit housing developers. We build in both large, more urban communities, and in smaller communities like Bristol, where we have 20 apartments under construction.

Vermont made a commitment to perpetual affordability back in 1987 when VHCB was created. That was a huge step, and Vermont's commitment to perpetual affordability has been steadfast. Why is this important? Just look at states who have not adopted long-term affordability as a state policy. In those states, where affordability is required for only 30 years or less, hundreds of affordable rental units are lost to conversion to market rate housing. Perpetual affordability means that the housing becomes a resource to the community, that can not be lost. Just as we conserve land in perpetuity, and which becomes a forever resource to that community, we create housing that is a forever resource.

Another underlying principle of our efforts is mixed income housing. We have learned from mistakes made in the past with national housing policy, that we do not create healthy communities when we concentrate all of the poor in one building. Likewise, we don't look to build only middle income housing, to the exclusion of the less wealthy, in rural communities. Back to the Bristol example, Firehouse Apartments targets 15 of the homes to below 60%, and 5 of the homes to up to 100% of median income, creating a vibrant, mixed income neighborhood.

Continued support of funding for VHCB is essential to our pipeline. And in response to the housing crisis, the additional investments made in VHCB has meant that more Vermonters are housed.

We have over 300 units under construction across the state.

We have another 590 apartments in 16 different projects around the state, from West Rutland to St. Johnsbury that are in various stages of permitting and predevelopment. But without an additional investment directed to VHCB by this Legislature, some of these 16 projects will stall and may not be built.

It's time to fully fund VHCB at its statutory amount at \$27.8M, and the Governor's recommended base funding of \$15.4M is inadequate.

We need housing of all types and for all Vermonters. That's going to take an investment of \$175M this year in the FY23 budget adjustment and FY 24 budget to address a variety of needs across the housing spectrum.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and most of all for your continued and longstanding support of affordable housing.