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Hello,

My name is Sam Mayne, and I am District Manager for the Essex County Natural Resources Conservation District in Brunswick, VT. I am here to ask that you please increase base funding for the Natural Resources Conservation Council by \$2.5 million for a total base budget of \$3 million to address the chronic underfunding of Vermont's Natural Resources Conservation Districts and support our state's conservation delivery system.

Vermont's Conservation Districts play a key role in helping towns, businesses, and individuals access State and federal programs to create resilient communities. We are governed by elected residents of our service areas and cater our programs to the specific needs of the people in our community. We have processes in place to continuously get feedback from our community to ensure we are meeting existing needs.

I personally spend much of my time working with town road crews in Essex County to make sure roads meet MRGP standards and can handle extreme storms like the ones we had last summer. Without Conservation District assistance, many of the small towns in my area and around the state would not be able to access many of the funding opportunities for road work, and their roads would be less resilient. We also help individuals and businesses like farmers and forest owners access grants for and carry out a wide array of projects to increase community resilience.

Again, please increase base funding for the Natural Resources Conservation Council by \$2.5 million for a total base budget of \$3 million to address the chronic underfunding of Vermont's Natural Resources Conservation Districts and support our state's conservation delivery system.