

Thanks for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Kayleigh Boyle, I am here as the co-owner of Breadseed Farm in Craftsbury, Vermont.

I am here to support NOFA-VT's request for \$478,500 in base funding to Strengthen Vermont Farm Viability and Address Food Security by sustaining two proven programs: CROP CASH (include plus) and FARM SHARE.

Crop Cash doubles 3SquaresVT (SNAP) benefits, dollar for dollar, for fruits and vegetables purchased at Vermont farmers markets.

The Farm Share Program has subsidized CSA shares 1 for limited-income Vermonters for 30 years. The Farm Share Program pays for 25-75% of the CSA cost. My farm has benefited greatly from both of these programs.

Breadseed Farm is a one acre no-till farm that grows vegetables, flowers and herbs for direct markets in Northern Vermont. We currently vend full time at the Montpelier, Stowe, and Waitsfield markets along and offer Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share closer to home in Craftsbury, Greensboro and Hardwick. I wanted to come and testify today to let you know how important both the crop cash and farm share program are for our small business' viability. Without these programs we could not have found the success we have at the farmers markets we attend, or have had as many CSA share sign ups, two hugely important revenue streams for our small business. More importantly crop cash and the farm share program allowed us to reach members of our community who might otherwise not be able to access our food. It is important to myself and my partner that our organic produce is accessible to everyone in the community, and it is these programs that take the burden off the farm needing to lower prices, and provides these mutually beneficial food access programs to the community.

In the 2023 season, 20% of our sales at the Montpelier farmers market were through crop cash purchases. This was \$400 extra in sales per week. At the Waitsfield market, almost all of our customers used crop cash at one point in the season through the widespread use of the P-EBT program. In the past three years of offering a CSA, 15% of our shares were funded through NOFA's Farm Share program. This allowed us to reach four limited income community members through weekly fresh vegetable shares, and is up to an additional \$2400 extra income for the farm. CSAs are a high cost up front, with the idea that you are funding a farmer during the leanest months of their year, so the ability to offer subsidized shares is a huge benefit while advertising what our CSA can offer to the community. Through the extra income brought in from these programs we have been able to reinvest money into our business to continue to improve our systems, so we can continue to provide the highest quality vegetables to our customers.

I grew up in the Northeast Kingdom and if you were to tell eighteen year old me that I would be back living in a rural area working in agriculture I would never have believed you. While I didn't grow up on a farm, I grew up with a big garden and surrounded by families who made a living from the land. It was after leaving Vermont and realizing how much I missed the landscape and access to quality local foods that I found my way into working in farm based education and food access on a non-profit farm outside of Boston. My partner Doug and I dreamed of having our own farm for years and after working and managing farms in Mass for over a decade, we found our land in Craftsbury. It was a leap to start a farm business and so much of what you read is how it is impossible to make a small business profitable. I think that the edge that our business was given these past three years was through the support of these NOFA-VT food access programs. The extra income adds boost to our weekly farmers market income that would be hard to loose. If we want farm businesses to thrive in our state where agriculture is at the heart of communities, we need to continue to fund these food access programs.

As a farm business owner the most rewarding part of the job is connecting with and feeding my community. With the availability of crop cash and the farm share program my farm along with farms across the state will continue to thrive and so will all our neighbors. That is why I am here to support NOFA-VT's request for \$478,500 in the state budget for our food access programs.

Thank you again for the opportunity.