

Contact Information:

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Good afternoon to you all, my name is Carissa Stein. I reside in Montgomery, Vermont and I serve as a Board Supervisor for the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District.

We have not met and I regret that I am unable to be in-person today with you all. Today, I ask that you increase base funding for the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council. A request for a total base appropriation of three million dollars to support Vermont's fourteen Natural Resources Conservation Districts.

Thank you for the opportunity to add personal context for the request. I have involvement as a partner, volunteer, and now a supervisor with the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District. I have witnessed our team actively creating connections and relationships in our Franklin County community. They have done this by being the boots on the ground. They show up and most notably *follow through*.

We have very talented staff and they have allocated a lot of time to apply for and manage multiple grants. Grant opportunities that are worth doing. Nevertheless, there is a need for more balance. The bulk of the grant's funds go to the project, correctly so, and this reduces their capacity to work on the ground or face-to-face with our communities. My hope and reason for this appeal is to see them have more time at community meetings, more time working with landowners one-on-one, and more time that they can allocate to help find solutions. Your support would greatly assist the Franklin County Conservation District to allocate further energy towards that resilient Vermont we know and love.

I am grateful for your time and attention and hope you will consider increasing the total base appropriation of three million dollars to support Vermont's fourteen Natural Resources Conservation Districts.