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MEMORANDUM

To: Rep. Johnson
From: Rep. Partridge
Date: March 12, 2015
Subject: Agriculture Funding Priorities

The House Agriculture and Forest Products Committee has reviewed provisions relating to agriculture in the Governor's Proposed FY 2016 budget. The committee strongly recommends full support for critical agricultural programs that have been underfunded or eliminated in that budget. Specifically, Working Lands should receive \$1.5 million, which was the Governor's recommend for FY 2015; Farm to School should receive \$140,000; Agricultural Fair stipends should be restored to \$175,000; and the 2+2 program should receive \$60,000.

These programs are critical to supporting Vermont's agricultural renaissance and maintaining the character of our state. The programs provide both revenue and positive health benefits for Vermonters.

We urge the Appropriations Committee to allocate the funds requested. If current revenue projections cannot provide funding for these important programs, we urge that these priorities be at the top of the list when an improved economy brings in additional revenue for FY2016

Our Committee is committed to providing sustainable funding for these critically important programs. In support of this commitment, we are working on a bill that will provide additional revenues to help meet this goal through a dedicated fund.