

WORKING LANDS GRANT PROGRAM

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As a recipient of a Working Lands Grant, I would like to tell you how I feel as to its importance. I was involved in a project to build a wood pellet manufacturing plant in the Northeast Kingdom and in 2013, during the early stage of the project, a feasibility study was needed. With the aid of VHCB, thru their Farm and Forrest program, I was able to obtain a Working Lands Grant. This Grant was the foundation, enabling me to obtain additional financing. With the backing of the Working Lands Grant and the assistance of NCIC, I was able to secure a USDA Grant. With this combination of financing, my own resources and guidance from the Northern Forrest Center I was able to have a feasibility study conducted. This study showed the availability of raw, renewable, natural resources needed and its impact on them... the potential market of product... the number of new jobs created... both direct and indirect...and the need for such a project. It showed the positive impact such a facility would have on the local economy. It showed a strong probability of success. With this new information, I was able to move forward on the project. Without the Working Lands Grant, it would have been very difficult... Unfortunately, after another year and a half of intense work and financial commitment, other factors prevented this project from come to completion.

The Working Lands Grant was an integral component in building a foundation on which to determine further action. With Vermont struggling to attract new business, any help for start-up or expanding companies can make the difference in key decisions. The Working Lands Grant Program fosters the use of our lands and the natural resources it provides in an economical positive environment while at the same time maintaining a responsible stewardship. With your support, Vermont can continue to grow and prosper. I urge you to keep the Working Lands Grant Program strong with your full support for funding in the upcoming year.