



Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility
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Friday, March 3, 2017

Dear member of the House Appropriations Committee,

Climate change is among the most pressing issues facing our environment and our economy. Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility was founded 27 years ago with the mission of advancing a triple-bottom line approach to business – placing people and planet alongside profit as the goals of our business community. Today, our more than 750 members continue to live that ethic.

That's why we are writing to you today in support of a \$300,000 allocation for the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund to launch the Climate Economy Business Accelerator and Network. This work, in collaboration with the Vermont Council on Rural Development, builds on Vermont's success in creating and growing green collar jobs – now totaling more than 17,000 across the state.

VBSR believes that fully funding the Climate Economy Business Accelerator and Network is an essential element to Vermont's approach to combating climate change because the program will:

- Provide training and technical assistance to a growing sector of our economy that is creating high quality and well-paying jobs for Vermonters.
- Build on Vermont's successful history of using innovation and entrepreneurship in the business community to address the threat of climate change.
- Help bridge the gap between entrepreneurs and potential funders by providing the mentorship and networking opportunities necessary to make these connections.

This Accelerator initiative will attract start-ups from Vermont and across the country to participate in a series of mentorships and investment opportunities, helping these emerging companies grow into successful climate economy employers. This is the type of work that VSJF knows how to do, and do well; the

organization's work with programs such as Vermont Farm to Plate and Vermont Forest Products Value Chain Investment Program show its record of success.

We thank you for your support for this important work.

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