

From: ec paris [ericatparis@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 8:37 PM
To: Theresa Utton; Rebecca Buck
Subject: Working Lands Initiative Funding

Dear members of the Vermont House and Senate Appropriations Committees,

As a full time Vermont Dairy Farmer for the past thirty seven years I am very aware of the many challenges facing the many Vermonters who make their living working the beautiful Vermont land. Vermont has a treasure trove of natural resources and the state's farmers, foresters, loggers and landscapers are blessed to have these natural resources to work with.

As full time stewards of the land we have the enormous responsibility of keeping the Vermont countryside beautiful and productive. We have to maintain the balance of maximizing production of food and fiber while also maintaining the iconic beauty of the fields and forests that draw visitors to our state. The responsible management of our lands and its resources create many thousands of jobs throughout the state of Vermont; agriculture, forestry, tourism and hospitality to name a few. Additionally, the responsible stewardship of the land and its resources indirectly generate many more millions of dollars in state revenue in the form of state fuel taxes and rooms and meals taxes collected from visitors to our state and residents alike.

As stewards of the Vermont lands we are also faced with the responsibility of leaving the land and its many resources beautiful and productive for future generations. But all of these responsibilities, unrecognized by most Vermont residents present a host of challenges.

An ever changing business climate forces us to continuously make adjustments to our businesses and diversification is a consistent necessity. We are constantly looking for new ways to become more efficient and to produce a better product at a lower cost, leave a lesser carbon footprint and to be better stewards of the land for our fellow Vermonters and future generations.

The Working Lands Initiative is imperative to the future well being of the Vermont countryside. As a past recipient of a Working Lands grant I am very much aware of the competitive nature of the application process and the stringent criteria one must meet to become a recipient; the applications chosen for grant funding are the ones showing the most benefit to Vermont residents and its beautiful landscape. These are funds that must be matched by the recipient and perpetuate a needed improvement to an existing business or a needed expansion which in most circumstances lead to an increase in business revenue and job creation which usually go hand in hand.

Therefore I respectfully request that the Working Lands Initiative be funded at the requested one million dollar level. In my opinion this will be a wise investment by the state that will see many returns.

Respectfully,

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