



**Senate Committee on  
Economic Development,  
Housing and General  
Affairs**

**January 13, 2017**

*Re: 2017 Legislative Priorities*

Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR) is a non-profit, statewide business trade organization with a mission to advance business ethics that value multiple bottom lines- economic, social, and environmental. We strive to help members set a high standard for protecting the natural, human and economic environments of the state's residents, while remaining profitable. The organization was founded in 1990 and today has more than 750 members across Vermont.

VBSR's Board of Directors currently includes *Northland Design & Construction, AllEarth Renewables, B Lab, Cx Associates, Black River Produce, Champlain College, Merrill Lynch, Cabot Creamery, TruexCullins, Davis & Hodgdon Associates, Gardener's Supply Company, Ben & Jerry's, New Chapter, Focal Point Advisory, Green Mountain College, SunCommon, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Career Networks, Gallagher, Flynn & Company, and Vermont Trophy & Engraving.*

**Education**

Empowering our members to solve environmental, social and economic problems. We provide concrete resources and information to help improve our members' business practices.

**Public Influence**

Initiating tangible change in public policy that combats exploitation and promotes sustainability. We work to capture the inherent

power of business to represent socially responsible ideals to legislative bodies, news media, and the general public.

**Workplace Quality**

Enabling every worker to live and work with respect and dignity by creating work environments and economic climates that provide fair income in safe work settings, and allow each employee to contribute to a high quality product or service.



**Vermont Intern Program**

A program of Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, the Vermont Intern Program is funded by the Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Education and Training Fund with support from UVM Continuing Distance and Education. Our purpose is to expose young people in Vermont to the diversity of career opportunities in the state.

Program Success (2013 data):

- Pre-screened over 500 applications and placed 41 students and recent graduates in high quality PAID internships
- Worked with 75 Vermont businesses across the state to create internship opportunities, 60% of which were new participants in the program

- .Increased the size of our applicant pool by 47% growing from 700 to 1500 applicants

businesses by acting as your extra purchasing agent, sales staff, event planner, network connector, and budget adviser.

### **VBSR Policy Program**

Initiating tangible change in public policy that combats exploitation and promotes sustainability. We work to capture the inherent power of business to represent socially responsible ideals to legislative bodies, news media, and the general public.

Prior VBSR advocacy campaigns:

- Farm to Plate
- Labeling GMO food
- Benefit Corporations
- Earned Sick Leave
- Ban the Box

**90% of VBSR members say they get good value for their taxes they pay**

### **Top 4 contributors to the success of VBSR businesses (2016 survey data)**

- Vermont brand
- Vermont quality of life
- Access to skilled workforce
- Access to government officials

### **Top 4 obstacles to the success of VBSR businesses**

- Cost of health care
- Lack of public transportation
- Lack of affordable housing
- Access to affordable and high quality child care services

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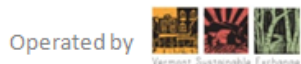
### **Local First Vermont**

Local First Vermont members are local business owners, professionals, non-profit leaders and government representatives who are committed to preserving the character and prosperity of Vermont's economy, community networks and natural landscape.

Our mission is to preserve and enhance the economic, human, and natural vitality of Vermont communities by promoting the importance of purchasing from locally owned independent businesses. We achieve this through education of citizens, businesses and local governments.



MARKETPLACE



### **VBSR Marketplace**

The Marketplace is a Trade Network of Vermont businesses who want to do business with you! The Marketplace connects Vermont