

April 6, 2018

Senator Jane Kitchel, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633

RE: FY 19 funding – regional planning commissions

Dear Chair Kitchel and Members of the Committee;

On behalf of Vermont's regional planning commissions, I would like to thank you and Committee members for your recognition over the years of the value added we bring to Vermonters and to state government. We believe these investments in our capacity enhance the effective delivery of services.

I would like to briefly summarize three specific funding streams on which you will be discussing and making decisions.

1. Property Transfer Tax funding distributed through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development

The Administration's budget submission proposed level funding for regional planning commissions for FY 19 and the House concurred. This critical funding enables tremendous leveraging of federal funds. We ask that you support the Governor's recommendation on this.

2. Public Service Department funding of Enhanced Municipal Energy Plan Development

Year 3 of the State's commitment to provide the support RPCs need to assist municipalities in preparing Enhanced Energy Plans that carry more weight in Section 248 energy siting proceedings. The Administration did not include this in their budget. The House Energy Committee indicated that this is their top priority. Based on a continued high level of demand, the House budget did include an appropriation for FY 19 of \$300,000. We ask that you concur with the House on this appropriation.

3. Clean Water funding (non-capital) from the Agency of Natural Resources

There are two budget line items that we would draw to your attention.

First, the Administration proposed a 20% cut (from \$410,000 to \$330,000) to regional planning commissions and natural resource conservation districts in their efforts in developing basin plans, the foundation from which flows clean water projects. This reduction will slow the development of meaningful basin plans, plans that are required under state and federal law. We respectfully request that you direct the Administration to level fund basin planning at \$410,000.

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William B. Emmons, III, Chair
Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director

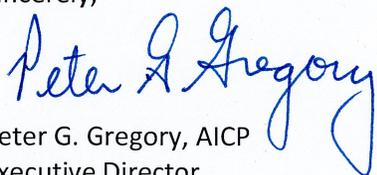
Kitchel letter,
Page 2

Second, the Administration is proposing only \$300,000 for project development efforts. This work is critically needed to move water quality problems from being conceptual to being ready to construct. We respectfully request that you direct the Administration to provide \$700,000 in project development funds.

We asked the House to direct the Administration's (Clean Water Fund Board) funding be re-directed from what they proposed to a position of level funding for basin planning at \$410,000 and appropriating \$700,000 for project development. Our request was late to the House due to learning about this late, but this request had no traction in the House.

Please let me know if you need any further detail on these requests.

Sincerely,



Peter G. Gregory, AICP
Executive Director