

Rebecca Buck

From: Margaret Mccoy <margaret@vtrural.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 1:45 PM
To: Jane Kitchel; Alice Nitka; Richard Sears; Robert Starr; Richard McCormack; Tim Ashe; rawestman@gmail.com; Rebecca Buck; Stephanie Barrett
Subject: Working Lands Coalition - letter to Senate Appropriations
Attachments: WLLetter to SenateApprops417.pdf

Dear Chair Kitchel and Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations:

Please see the attached letter from the Working Lands Coalition encouraging your continued support of WLEB at the \$900,000 investment for FY'18. The Coalition appreciates your hard work on the budget and your leadership in support of the rural and working lands economy.

Margaret

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Working Lands Coalition Partners

The Center for an
Agricultural Economy

NOFA Vermont

Preservation Trust of
Vermont

Shelburne Farms

Vermont Association
of Planning and
Development Agencies

Vermont Community
Loan Fund

Vermont Council on
Rural Development

Vermont Farm Bureau

Vermont Land Trust

Vermont Natural
Resources Council

The Vermont
Sustainable Jobs Fund
and Farm to Plate

Vermont Wood
Manufacturers
Association

Vermont Woodlands
Association

The Woodstock
Foundation

Dear Chair Kitchel and the Senate Appropriations Committee,

As you all continue your hard work on the 2018 budget, we wanted to take a moment to ask for your support of the House's funding position for the Working Lands Enterprise Fund.

Working Lands Enterprise fund is not only a smart investment, it is impacting positively Vermont's rural economy which we know is in a challenging point of transition.

Since its inception in 2012, the Working Lands Board, with your support, has invested over \$3.8 million dollars in 129 projects impacting every county of the state, leveraging \$7.4 million in additional funds.

Over the last 5 years, working lands grantees have:

- created 428 new full-time jobs, and
- generated \$18.1 million in new sales.

That's a job is created for every \$9,000 invested. It is almost impossible to identify any other state or federal program with that level of efficiency.

Additionally, 98% of Working Lands grantees report expanding into new markets, 45% report enhanced environmental stewardship, and 30% report increased employee wages as a result of their grant.

WLEB investments are creating jobs – good Vermont-made jobs the Vermont way – the type of jobs that honor Vermont's agriculture and forest heritage and celebrate our working landscape. WLEB investments are supporting entrepreneurs, innovators, and business owners in our farm, food, and forest sectors. And WLEB investments are impacting positively the culture and communities of Vermont's rural communities.

We know that these are challenging budgetary conditions, but we think the results show that WLEB is worthy of the investment. **To that end, we ask that you continue your support of WLEB and the working lands renaissance in the FY18 at the \$900,000 investment.**

Sincerely,

Paul Costello, *VCRD Executive Director*
For the Working Landscape Partnership and Coalition