



April 9, 2018

Dear Chairman Sirotkin and members of the Committee,

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on H. 767. Given the challenges of running and growing a small business, and the important role small businesses play in our economy, we support H. 767 as passed by the House. We would like to submit this letter as follow-up to our initial testimony. During our initial remarks, the Committee asked which of the seven eligibility criteria we think our members would find particularly helpful. The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce certainly supports funding in all of these areas but based on the needs we hear expressed by our members, would prioritize those listed below.

1. Provide workforce training projects that cannot receive grants from other State or federal program and that serves an immediate employer need to fill one or more job vacancies.
2. Leverage economic development funding outside of state government such as federal New Market Tax Credits and Small Business Innovation Research grants
3. Provide technical assistance to support small business growth

We would also stress the importance of these dollars remaining "flexible" for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to deploy where needed. The funding included in H.767 is modest but we think it represents a prudent investment in Vermont small businesses. Additionally, the LCRC would also like to voice our support for the funding necessary to implement the Stay-to-Stay Weekends program. We would be excited to see the program occur in northern Vermont and have the opportunity to show potential new residents the benefits of living and working in our region.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashten Stringer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'A'.

Ashten Stringer

Government Affairs Specialist, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce