

Dear Chair Sirotkin and Committee,

I am writing you in support of H.767 THINKVERMONT INNOVATION INITIATIVE. I say this as the House representative to the Vermont Economic Progress Council.

This initiative allows us to reach down to the small businesses under- served by the Vermont Employment Growth Initiative or the Vermont Training Program. The grants are short in duration with suitable match provisions. As you can see by the grant distribution process ,Section 1 (b) , these grants will be diverse in size, business model and geography.

As a small business owner, I appreciate what access to small grants mean in the life of a business. Microgrants go hand in hand with the CAP agencies' microbusiness classes. These would be our non-traditional entrepreneurs who have lots of time and energy but not much start up cash.

H.767 says " Vermont Economic Progress Council shall: (A) adopt a schedule and process for accepting, reviewing, and approving grant proposals on a competitive basis." This fits in nicely with H.548 which directs the Council to conduct an economic development study focusing on small towns. The Think Vermont Innovation Initiative is an excellent fit along with VEGI and VTP.

This is an agile and well planned initiative that I believe will have a beneficial impact far greater than its appropriation.

Rep. Jean O'Sullivan
Vermont Economic Progress Council