

Good morning. My name is Anne Watson; I'm the mayor of Montpelier, and I'm here to speak on behalf of the Vermont Mayors Coalition. We recently came out with a platform for the 2019 legislative session, and I'm here to ask you to consider items from that platform, aspects of the budget that directly affect the well-being of cities and towns across Vermont.

The mayor's coalition supports a \$250,000 increase in downtown and village-center tax credits that offset the costs of rehabilitation and major investments in elevators, sprinklers and other code improvements needed to make downtown buildings safe and accessible. Vermont's Mayors have seen firsthand how downtown tax credits positively affect communities and entire regions. The State historic tax credit program is one of the most effective redevelopment programs the State offers – with every dollar of tax credit leveraging an average of \$17 in outside investment. These investments have helped transform communities – supporting new housing, attracting new businesses, fostering business expansions, and creating good jobs in downtowns and villages across the state.

The mayors also have a section of their platform dedicated to energy and climate initiatives. Local municipalities are close to the ground so to speak when it comes to climate change. We must deal directly with replacing roads, bridges, and culverts when flooding occurs. As we have recently seen, water mains break when fluctuations in temperature become more extreme, for example. So to be specific, the mayors support investments in electric vehicle charging stations, to make electric vehicle alternatives even more desirable. We support initiatives and funding for energy-saving weatherization for Vermonters with low-incomes. When we, as mayors, were discussing these items at the time, we didn't call it the climate package, as was previously mentioned, but that's effectively what it is.

I'm grateful for your time. Please consider supporting downtown tax credits and energy and climate efforts with this year's budget. Thanks