

I am John Gorton from Fairfield, and I am here to express support for the Vermont Foodbank budget adjustment request of \$6 million. I am a US Naval Academy graduate, retired from active duty in nuclear submarines, retired from providing engineering ship design support to the navy as a Dept of Defense contractor, and semi retired as a farmer. I am currently very active in social service work including the FGI Community Partnership, FGI Hunger Council, Franklin County Food Shelf Alliance, and FGI Building Bright Futures Council. I am a certified lay servant in the United Methodist Church and along with several other volunteers, I run the Sheldon Methodist Church Food Shelf. We are currently serving about 150 families, about 450 people, distributing approximately 15,000 lbs of food per month. We are open 5 days a week and operate a variety of programs to reach families. We have a dedicated time for school families, stock the school "share refrigerator", work with CVOEO to support families transitioning from temporary to permanent housing, provide free community dinners, and distribute Age Well "grab and go" meals. To put our effort into sobering financial perspective:

A grocery cart full of food including dairy, meat, produce, and dry goods will cost about \$350 at check out. The food I provide each of my 150 client families is a similar mix that would more than fill a grocery cart. That represents about \$50K worth of food every month, North of half a million dollars of food every year. I do that on an operating budget of about \$25,000 per year.

Over 85% of the food I provide my clients comes from or thru the VT Foodbank. Their funding is the foundation which I leverage to accomplish what I do. I am one of over 200 "network partners" of the VT Foodbank. The specific statistics and operating programs of other partners are different, but the key result is the same for all of us. Collectively we partners multiply the \$6 million of VT Foodbank funding into tens of millions of dollars in direct food aid to the neediest and most vulnerable families and children in every community all across this state. It is a return on investment that is hard to beat.

I encourage you to include this \$6 million funding for the Vermont Foodbank in the budget adjustment.

Thank You,

John Gorton