

Theresa Utton-Jerman

Subject: Public Hearing on Governor's FY23 Recommended State Budget - Jan. 9

From: Abbie Corse

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Good afternoon and thank you for having me here today. My name is Abbie Corse and I live in Whitingham, VT. I am testifying today in support of the Natural Resources Conservation District's Funding Requests for FY2023 of \$2.1 million in one-time funding for a 3-year Agricultural Resource Specialist Training Program, \$248,000 in one-time funding for immediate equipment and capital improvement needs, and \$1.5 million in base funding to support ongoing needs.

I am speaking in my capacity as the Farm & Forest sector representative to the Vermont Climate Council and a co-chair of its Agriculture & Ecosystems subcommittee. We find ourselves in a moment where strategic investments in climate change adaptation and resilience efforts are critical. To quote from the Climate Action Plan, "the strategies that the State of Vermont must take to secure the health, resilience, and benefits of climate adaptation in natural and working lands include critical investments in the upfront costs of proactive implementation of adaptation practices, research and training to support land managers in making climate-informed plans and decisions, greater support for floodplain and riparian restoration efforts, and enhanced protections of biodiversity."

In an amazing opportunity funding the NRCD in this way would mean that work towards all of the above goals could be sustained and enhanced. The NRCD has already done so much incredible work to capacitate and resource landowners, farmers, and citizens in addition to building long lasting relationship with their communities which I'm certain you all very well understand to be the underpinning of how good work is done. Farmers in particular, of which I am one, are a notoriously tricky lot to reach but the NRCD has already begun successful work in this regard. These folks are ready to get boots on the ground, roll up their sleeves and continue the working towards our shared goals of adaptation and resilience - they just need the funding to do it. My gratitude to you all for your hard work on behalf of Vermont's citizenry and my hopes that you will deeply consider our funding request. Thank you.

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