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STATE OF VERMONT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
AND FORESTRY

February 24, 2022

Dear Rep. Hooper and members of the House Committee on Appropriations,

We, the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, appreciate your hard work and the difficult decisions you have to make. All of our suggestions are for organizations and entities that are instrumental in creating a prosperous rural economy, food security, promotion of agricultural literacy, and water quality.

To be clear, all of the following requests are for one-time money.

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has had a dramatic and important impact on the success and prosperity of our agricultural and forestry sectors. They have asked for a transformational amount of funding that will allow for the granting of larger infrastructure investments at \$15 million

The Farm to School Program currently receives \$171,000 in base funding. They would like \$329,000 to increase access to nutritious, healthy meals for school children. When our children are well-nourished, they think and learn more effectively, which in turn assures that our education dollars are being better spent.

The Vermont Association of Conservation Districts and the regional Conservation Districts are instrumental in helping farmers and others employ practices that improve water quality. They are asking for \$2.348 million for training and infrastructure improvements to help us reach our goals of cleaning up the waters of the state.

We have been having conversations about establishing a regional food supply system to better prepare us for future emergencies such as another pandemic and/or climate change. The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund has been working on this and has requested an additional \$150,000 to do that important work.

The Vermont Agricultural Fairs and Field Days get a base amount of \$110,000 but could use an additional \$90,000 to help with COVID losses. They contribute to cultural and historical enrichment and agricultural literacy, as well as offer fun family activities for all. They also contribute more than \$100,000 in tax receipts to state coffers.

As we're sure you know, choosing is difficult and we understand the economic constraints. If there is one-time money available, we would appreciate your consideration of these suggestions and we trust your judgment in your decision making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Partridge".

Carolyn Partridge, Chair
House Agriculture and Forestry Committee