



## **VERMONT HOUSING and CONSERVATION COALITION**

February 5, 2021

**\*\*VIA EMAIL\*\***

Dear Chair Marcotte,

We are writing on behalf of our 50+ member organizations across the state that support and respond to the economic, community, health, and environmental needs of Vermonters and our towns and cities.

**We encourage you and your committee to support the Governor's \$34.8M FY22 Budget Recommend for the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board so we can put those resources right to work in communities all across the state.** This represents the appropriate statutory share of the skyrocketing property transfer tax plus one-time funds that we can move out the door quickly to support Vermont's economic recovery from the pandemic while ensuring we are leaving no one behind.

Our organizations have been, and continue to be, the State's go-to vehicle to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, support the rural economy, build sustainable, healthy and equitable communities, and make Vermont affordable and economically vibrant. There is much work to be done as too many Vermonters, small businesses, and communities still struggle. That's why the Governor's proposed increased investment matters so much right now.

As you know, investments from VHCB creates jobs through construction of housing and trails, provides affordable homeownership opportunity, supports the tourism and outdoor recreation sectors, and supports our workforce with housing that fits into tight household budgets.

As you make your recommendations to the Appropriations Committee, we ask you to consider two items:

- **PIPELINE OF DIVERSE PROJECTS.** This is the ideal time to take fuller advantage of the statewide network of housing and conservation organizations to both respond to immediate needs of Vermonters and to invest in our economy, landscape, and community infrastructure that will deliver benefits for years to come. We have a pipeline of ready-to-go projects larger than the Governor's recommendation could fund.
- **FLEXIBILITY OF FUNDS.** These needed investments are varied across the state and we urge you to encourage flexibility for VHCB to direct funds as needed to respond to

individual community needs – *whether they are for housing or for conservation*. The budget language directs one-time funds for housing only. We value VHCB's staff leadership and Board to assess and support the most critical needs in our communities.

The appropriation recommended by the Governor will be an engine for job growth and economic recovery. VHCB's partners – our members – are eager to help you with Vermont's economic and community recovery.

**We urge you to ask your peers in the Appropriations Committee to support VHCB at \$34.8M in FY22.**

Sincerely,

Chris Donnelly, Champlain Housing Trust  
Molly Dugan, Cathedral Square  
Phil Huffman, The Nature Conservancy  
Abby White, Vermont Land Trust

Co-Chairs of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Coalition

cc: Rep. Charles Kimbell, Vice Chair  
Rep. Stephanie Jerome, Ranking Member  
Rep. Eileen Dickinson  
Rep. Warren F. Kitzmiller  
Rep. Paul Martin  
Rep. Emma Mulvaney-Stanak  
Rep. Logan Nicoll  
Rep. Michael Nigro  
Rep. Patrick Seymour  
Rep. Kirk White, Clerk  
Rep. Kimberly Jessup

**Members of Vermont Housing and Conservation Coalition:**

Addison County Community Trust  
Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions  
Audubon Vermont  
Barre Housing Authority  
Burlington Housing Authority  
Catamount Trail Association  
Cathedral Square Corporation  
Capstone Community Action, Inc.  
Champlain Housing Trust  
Charlotte Land Trust  
Chittenden County Regional Planning  
CVOEO - Fair Housing Project

Trust for Public Land Action Fund  
The Conservation Fund  
Cross Vermont Trail  
Downstreet Housing & Community Development  
Green Mountain Club  
Highgate Non-Profit  
Hinesburg Land Trust  
HomeShare Vermont  
HOPE  
Housing Trust of Rutland County  
Housing Vermont  
Intervale Center  
Jericho Underhill Land Trust  
Lake Champlain Land Trust  
Lamoille Housing Partnership  
Lewis Creek Association  
Middlebury Area Land Trust  
NeighborWorks of Western Vermont  
Northgate Residents Ownership Corp.  
Passumpsic Valley Land Trust  
Preservation Trust of Vermont  
Putney Mountain Association  
Randolph Area Community Devel. Corp.  
Richmond Land Trust  
RuralEdge  
Shires Housing  
Sierra Club  
South Hero Land Trust  
Springfield Housing Authority  
Stowe Land Trust  
The Nature Conservancy  
Tinmouth Land Trust  
Trust for Public Land  
Twin Pines Housing Trust  
Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission  
Vital Communities Workforce Housing Program  
Upper Valley Land Trust  
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition  
Vermont Center for Independent Living  
Vermont Community Loan Fund  
Vermont Land Trust  
Vermont League of Conservation Voters  
Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council  
Vermont Natural Resources Council  
Vermont River Conservancy  
Williston Conservation Commission

Windham & Windsor Housing Trust  
Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association