

Senator Jane Kitchel  
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

April 15, 2021

Chair Kitchel,

In the Governor's proposed use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, \$50 million was recommended for Economic Recovery Grants, despite the Administration providing evidence that there is \$500 million in demonstrated unmet need remaining from 2020. While the undersigned organizations believe the need within the Vermont economy warrants a larger appropriation, we believe that this amount provides a sufficient first step if the General Assembly would be willing to provide flexibility to respond to new demonstrated need as it is presented by the recently passed Economic Recovery Bridge Grant program. To that end, we propose the following language be added to the FY 2022 budget.

- Include the Governor's proposed \$50 million for Economic Recovery Grants to be directed at the Economic Recovery Bridge Grants program (grant program) recently established under H.315.
- Expand the grant program to include employers who can demonstrate a loss beyond the year 2020 as established to those who can demonstrate a loss until May 1, 2021.
- Create the authority for the Joint Fiscal Committee to, in the time after adjournment, receive from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development the two reports required by the grant program's enabling language outlining program use and any oversubscription to the grant program.
- Charge the Joint Fiscal Committee to make an additional appropriation to the grant program within a reasonable time should the ACCD reports indicate the grant program is oversubscribed.

The undersigned organizations have extreme concerns about the consequences of not addressing the economic impact inflicted on employers, through no fault of their own, to preserve public health. Specifically, the need is seen most acutely in the tourism, hospitality, travel, events, and small-retail sectors. If more relief is not made available, severe economic scarring will plague Vermont's economy and its workforce resulting in slower recovery and the state lagging behind its neighbors and competitors.

Thank you,

Lake Champlain Chamber  
Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility  
Main Street Alliance of Vermont  
Vermont Retail & Grocers Association  
Vermont Chamber of Commerce

CC: Senate President Pro Tempore Becca Balint  
Senator Michael Sirotkin, Chair, Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and  
General Affairs