

I'm not sure we've met yet — I'm the CEO of Faraday, the 8-year-old \$4MM/year technology company in Burlington employing ~35 skilled Vermonters. Good to meet you!

I'm writing to express my sincere and urgent support for recapitalizing VCET. Back in our infancy in late 2012, David Bradbury was the only person in the state who met with us, listened, helped us improve our business plan, and eventually delivered institutional capital when we needed it the most.

Since then, others have joined our ranks (Cairn Cross at FreshTracks, Jason Chapnik at InterCap, etc.), but David/VCET were the first and most crucial supporters of our company early on. We quite literally would not be here today without them. I doubt we would have lasted a year. It goes without saying that these are difficult times. While nearly everybody is facing new challenges, I can speak for startup founders in Vermont. Traditional "big city" venture capital has always ignored our state. Covid has only exacerbated this phenomenon. Non-traditional sources of capital like VCET are more important than ever. VCET has already funded the next generation of Vermont employers. We must, as a state, continue to invest in this vehicle to ensure that the generation after that is thriving when our children are faced with either finding a great job here or leaving the state.

Thanks for your attention to this matter. If there's any other background information I can provide I would be more than glad to be help.

Be well,

Andy

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Andy Rossmeyssl
CEO, Faraday

Dear Chairman Marcotte

I am a proud transplanted Vermonter - native of Lyndonville, graduate of both Lyndon Institute and UVM, part-time resident of Stowe and currently a Trustee on UVM's Board. But it is the context of my day job as a Venture Capital investor, that I write you today in support of the Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies and encourage you to support VCET with additional state funds.

Upon graduating UVM with a degree in Computer Science I have built my career in the start-up economy, as both a company founder/operator and for the past twenty-five years as an early stage venture capital investor across the United States and the globe. When I started investing, venture capital and startups were almost exclusively centered in Silicon Valley and Boston, but with the emergence of the Internet and enabling technologies such as the Cloud and Open Source Software, entrepreneurship has been democratized, and supercharged by the pandemic, new startups are burgeoning everywhere. I am convinced that Vermont, with our history of ingenuity, hard work and collaboration can take our fair share of this new economy and bring important jobs and income to our state.

In 2010 I was fortunate to have joined VCET's advisory board and have witnessed firsthand the incredible impact their support has had on emerging entrepreneurs and the state's economy. VCET has funded more than 20 Vermont-based startups and brought in more \$180 million of outside capital, representing an amazing 43X their seed capital. These are statistics that would make any seed-stage funds in the country quite jealous.

There is a great opportunity for VCET to play a critical role to help Vermont recover and build for the future, as we look toward emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses are at the heart of economic growth and help to fortify a strong foundation for new employment and capital influx. Unlike other New England states such as New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island, we lack state a viable state government commitment to entrepreneurship. And while I know Vermont is a small state with modest means, a little capital will go a long way; the very nature of a Seed stage fund is to help founders get going on limited funds and help them recruit employees and capital to take their venture to greater heights. This is VCET's mission and I sincerely hope that you will appropriate greater funding to partner with them as they help build the next great Vermont companies.

Very sincerely yours,

David Aronoff

[David Aronoff](#)

Flybridge Capital Partners

I am a resident of Shelburne and the CEO of [InfiSense](#). We are an early stage hardware-enabled software company that gives experts the data they need to solve today's toughest problems, including climate change, building decarbonization and indoor food production.

We are bursting at the seams to grow our team, add customers, increase revenue and improve our product. However, we can't do this without an injection of outside capital. Our needs are modest, but the marginal impacts of this capital are huge. We would immediately hire various skill sets, from software development to marketing to sales and customer success. We would ramp up existing services that already use Vermont-based companies such as [Reconciled](#). We would hire interns from local schools. **In short, the talent we need is right here in Vermont.**

The Commerce committee needs to understand that early stage investment is hyper-local and there is a penalty for being an entrepreneur and startup based in Vermont. We have had numerous investors clearly state that they are hesitant to fund us due to our location and the fact that we're not in a major city. They do indicate that if we had early capital from local institutional funds like the Vermont Seed Fund that would make it easier for them to believe in what we're doing and co-invest.

The Seed Fund is essential for Vermont-based companies. Please recapitalize this fund. The impacts flow out of each small investment and this fund directly creates jobs, attracts more talent and investment, and ensures that Vermont can grow local businesses and keep families here.

Thanks for your consideration,

Tim

Tim Guiterman, CEO
InfiSense

I am reaching out about the Vermont Seed Fund. I am a serial entrepreneur based in Burlington, VT and have greatly benefited from the assistance of VCET, the team that manages the Vermont Seed Fund. I want to encourage the House Commerce Committee to strongly consider recapitalizing the Vermont Seed Fund.

The Vermont Seed Fund provides unique access to needed capital for very early stage companies in Vermont. Both my company Reconciled and my new startup Saasable have greatly benefited from access to early stage capital available in Vermont. Both businesses were not traditional businesses that I could get bank financing for, but early stage capital allowed me to still get started. Without this type of capital, we would not have been able to execute on the businesses that have allowed us to hire now close to 55 people between the two companies.

Recapitalizing the Vermont Seed Fund is more crucial now than it's ever been. As Vermonters wade through the challenges that the pandemic has brought to the state, access to seed capital is more important than ever. It's seed capital that allowed many of the innovative large employers to grow to the size they are today and allow new entrepreneurs to take the risks needed to spark future large employers for the state.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts and I'm happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Michael Ly
CEO

My name is Ethan Bechtel. I'm a Vermont healthcare technology entrepreneur working to grow a telehealth company based in Burlington, VT. The work we're doing to address COVID-19 is so timely that we were recently interviewed by *Entrepreneur Magazine* about using texting and video to address this pandemic and more recently, vaccine distribution (read here: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/348233>)

I'm writing to ask for your support for the Vermont Seed Capital Fund.

My brother and I founded our company, [OhMD](#), because after a decade working in healthcare, we realized the importance of patient communication on improving patient care.

The Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies is a perfect example of an organization that makes Vermont special. We have been fortunate to have the support of the Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies - and more specifically David Bradbury and Sam Roach Gerber - helping us navigate OhMD's growth. Without their support, knowledge, and entrepreneurial network, OhMD would certainly be at a disadvantage.

But without additional funding for VCET, companies like OhMD that are saving lives while solving the most important challenge of our generation, can't grow, hire, or give back to the Vermont economy.

I recognize how busy you must be and truly appreciate the consideration. Please feel free to call me with any questions.

Thank you,
Ethan

Ethan Bechtel

February 24, 2021

Representative Michael Marcotte, Chair
Representative Charlie Kimbell, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
Room 35, 115 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05641

RE: Recap the VT Seed Fund

Dear Representatives Marcotte and Kimball:

My name is Evan Carlson, the Entrepreneur-in-Residence at Do North Coworking in Lyndonville and also a small business owner. The past year has been beyond challenging for so many small businesses and startups in Vermont and we are so fortunate to have so many RPC's and local economic development groups available to help distribute relief funds. As we look forward we need to determine what our post-pandemic future looks like. If we want to see diverse job opportunities with higher wages for all, we must be intentional in our strategy and support innovation that leads to a more resilient rural economy. Support comes in many forms, truly innovative products and businesses that are transforming a market need more than just technical assistance, they need capital.

Do North Coworking is actively developing a Forest Products Accelerator Program to help establish and scale businesses with innovative products that utilize the regions excess low grade wood. Many of the businesses that we envision participating in this accelerator will require capital infusions to move from early stage startup to growth stage. The resources provided by the Vermont Center for Emerging Technology and the Seed Capital Fund they manage are absolutely essential to the success of our next generation businesses. Having these types of capital resources available will not only encourage business in our accelerator to stay here in Vermont but may also encourage new businesses to consider making it their home.

I hope that the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development will agree these investments are an important component of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Vermont and will recapitalize the Vermont Seed Capital Fund.

Thank you for your consideration.



Evan Carlson
Do North Coworking
Lyndonville, Vt