



April 6, 2023

Dear Senators Starr, Collamore, Westman, Campion and Wrenner,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you on March 31. As representatives of the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association we were grateful to offer our perspectives on the important role ornamental horticulture plays in the growing of trees, shrubs and perennials and how that offers the diversification of agriculture in the state. There is increasing demand for VT grown nursery stock for both residential landscapes as well as to accomplish the goals of ACT 76 and the Clean Water Initiative. The hundreds of acres of wetland and floodplain restoration and miles of buffer plantings for lakeshore and riparian areas are critical practices that are being funded through multiple state and federal sources. The demand is there but the majority of the plant material is coming from out-of-state nurseries.

With climate change increasing the challenges for farmers and growers throughout the Northeast and the development pressures of an urbanizing landscape, the demand for plant material both in Vermont and the Northeast is on the increase. We hope your committee and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will recognize both the economic and environmental value of growing the opportunities for ornamental horticulture to play in the diversification and sustainability of Vermont agriculture .

Sincerely,

Andrea Morgante

cc: AAFM Stephanie Smith and Kristina Sweet