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To the Members of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations,

Subject: Support for the Allocation of \$478,500 to NOFA Vermont's Crop Cash, Crop Cash Plus, and Farm Share Programs

Dear Esteemed Committee Members,

As a resident of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, a proponent of sustainable agriculture, and a mother of two boys who relies on 3 Squares Vermont for food assistance, I am writing to advocate for the allocation of \$478,500 in base funding for NOFA Vermont's Crop Cash, Crop Cash Plus, and Farm Share programs in the FY2025 state budget. This crucial investment supports Vermont's farmers, ensures food security, and addresses the obesity epidemic through the promotion of healthy, local food choices.

Direct Benefits to Children and Families Living in Poverty

The Crop Cash and Farm Share programs uniquely support children and families in poverty, making farmers' markets accessible to those who would otherwise be sidelined by the high costs. These programs democratize healthy eating by doubling the value of food stamps for purchasing local produce, breaking down barriers that too often steer low-income families toward less nutritious options.

A Call for Support

By funding these programs, we counteract the monopolization of our food system by corporate giants, affirming our commitment to food equity. This action will ensure all Vermonters have access to nutritious, locally grown food, reinforcing the importance of health and sustainability over

corporate profits.

The Need for Sustainable Choices

In an era where multinational corporations like Kraft Heinz and PepsiCo dominate, only 15 cents of every supermarket dollar reaches our farmers. The retail market, controlled by giants such as Walmart, Costco, Kroger, and Ahold Delhaize, stifles competition and limits consumer choice, undermining our local economies and the diversity of our diets.

Impact of Crop Cash (Plus) and Farm Share Programs

These programs have successfully bridged the gap between local farmers and consumers, fostering a resilient local food system that supports both our economy and our health. My personal journey, alongside my family's, underscores the transformative power of these programs, from my sister's flourishing farm business to my children's hands-on education in making healthy food choices.

Fighting Obesity and Corporate Dominance

Amidst an obesity crisis fueled by the marketing of addictive, processed foods, the Crop Cash program stands as a beacon of hope, empowering Vermonters to make healthier choices. Supporting these programs is not just an investment in food security—it's a stand against the corporate grip on our food system.

A Vision for Vermont's Future

Investing in NOFA Vermont's Crop Cash (Plus) and Farm Share programs is an investment in Vermont's future, prioritizing our health, our land, and our local economy. It's a choice to support a sustainable, equitable food system that benefits everyone from producer to consumer.

In conclusion, I implore you to allocate the necessary funds to these essential programs, thereby supporting the economic viability of Vermont's farms and the health of its people. Let's choose a future where local, healthy food is a right, not a privilege, for all Vermonters.

Thank you for considering this vital support for our community.

Sincerely,

Greta Jane Quintin