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108 Sewall St., P.O. Box 1036
Augusta, ME 04332
Phone: 207.688.8195
Fax: 207.620.7517

plcloggers.org

February 12, 2026

The Honorable David Durfee, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry
State of Vermont House of Representatives
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT. 05633-2228

Dear Representative Durfee,

On behalf of the Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast (PLC) and its membership in Vermont, we are writing to request the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry support continued funding in FY' 27 for the Supporting Loggers to Comply with the Acceptable Management Practices (SLoCAMP) pilot program, which is authorized under the Water Quality Assistance Program, 10 V.S.A. § 2622, at the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (Department). The logging community in Vermont is significantly challenged as a result of a myriad of constraints caused by weather, inflation, tariffs, and markets. As a result, continued support for this program would ensure that water quality protection on timber harvesting sites can continue at a high level, even despite current constraints.

As a result of this Committee's advocacy in the FY2025 Appropriations Act, the Vermont General Assembly appropriated \$1 million to the Department for the creation of SLoCAMP under the umbrella of the Water Quality Assistance Program. Since July 2025, SLoCAMP has provided significant financial assistance to logging contractors to support the implementation of proactive water quality protection and climate adaptation practices on harvest sites.

As detailed in the Department's report to the Committee on December 17, 2025, the program has been successful in supporting the implementation of water quality protection practices while offsetting associated costs. The logging community has responded enthusiastically to this program and the funding made available for the pilot should be fully utilized by mid to late 2026, less than a year after the program was launched.

SLoCAMP provides financial assistance to logging contractors to support:

1. Implementation of acceptable management practices (AMP) and other best practices defined by FPR on harvest sites to enhance water quality protection and climate measures before forest operations take place.
2. Purchases by logging contractors which include materials or practices that can be used for forest access road construction, landings, bridge construction, culverts, and sediment control in advance of a harvest.

As detailed in the report to the Committee, between July 21 and December 1, 2025, 33 applications were submitted for more than \$504,542. Of these 33 applications, 29 projects were deemed eligible for a total of \$376,291, with the average project utilizing \$12,976. As of December 1, 2025, \$323,709 was available for future projects, but based upon the need in 2025, it is expected that these funds will be encumbered no later than June 30, 2026, and the need far exceeds what is available for funding.

Early participant feedback from logging contractors indicated strong satisfaction with the program, especially the ease of application, clarity of requirements, responsiveness of staff and overall impact upon project feasibility. Contractors that participated in the program noted, “Without SLoCAMP, I would not have done this work,” and “The funding allowed us to do it right- not just the minimum”. Every participant indicated that they would engage in a similar program if offered in the future as they viewed it as high value, well-managed, and impactful in supporting water quality protection.

As the PLC has noted to the Committee on several occasions, the industry is going through a very challenging period. Markets are tight and contractors are operating on razor thin margins. As a result, these constraints often make AMP compliance an unfunded government mandate for contractors.

The impact of severe weather conditions that both stall harvesting and increase AMP related expenses are too great for contractors to budget ahead of each harvest. Logging jobs that have valuable timber to get out to market and/or create important forest health benefits are simply not possible without SLoCAMP support due to the high cost of AMP compliance.

SLoCAMP has created a situation where contractors can raise the bar to install high level AMPs without the stress of the expense eating into their bottom line and ensure that forests are sustainably and actively managed to meet society’s desire for forest products. However, without a commitment to future SLoCAMP funding, this program could be a shining example of government intervention with proven results, that fails to provide future benefits because of inconsistent support.

In closing, given strong contractor demand, demonstrated program impact and alignment with state water quality and climate change adaptation objectives, the Committee should support elimination of the “pilot” title and make this program permanent with an ongoing appropriation. It is our belief that since the program has been stood up and the start-up phase has been completed, an appropriation of \$750,000 would allow this program to continue effectively for the next fiscal year and ensure that Vermont’s forests, water resources and logging workforce remain resilient in the face of increasing climate and market pressures.

Thank you for consideration of our request and we look forward to working with you to move this forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana A. Doran". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dana Doran
Executive Director