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To Chair Durfee:

In 2023, the State of Vermont invested **\$500,000** to support Salvation Farms in establishing a food processing space for Vermont farm surplus. This investment created the foundation for a program that reduces food loss, supports farm viability, and expands access to affordable local food. **Ongoing base funding is needed to ensure long-term success and fully realize this initial investment.**

Salvation Farms is requesting **\$100,000 in annual ongoing funding** from the State of Vermont and inclusion in the **House Committee on Agriculture's budget memo**. Once fully operational, the program is projected to cost **\$325,000 annually**, with approximately **\$125,000 in earned revenue**. The requested state support would cover **less than one-third of operating costs**, with the remaining gap met through donations and grant funding.

In its first year, the program aims to **process more than 50,000 pounds of surplus crops**, transforming food that might otherwise go to waste into affordable, minimally processed local products. This **subsidized model** ensures access for institutions and charitable food program with limited budgets, including **Vermont schools, Meals on Wheels programs, the Department of Corrections, VT Foodbank, and community meal programs**, serving children, older adults, and incarcerated individuals.

Key benefits include:

- Reduced food loss and climate impact by utilizing surplus crops that would otherwise go to waste.
- Improved farm viability through diversified revenue opportunities for Vermont farmers.
- Expanded access to affordable local food for vulnerable Vermonters.
- A stronger agricultural economy and more resilient local food system statewide.

Salvation Farms is grateful for the State of Vermont's past support and hopes that commitment continues through ongoing operational funding.

Respectfully,

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