

Amanda Andrews

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My name is Amanda Andrews, I am the owner- operator of Tamarack Hollow Farm in Plainfield, and proudly a member of four of the organizations which have come together to advocate for the Farm Security Fund. I want to thank the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for the opportunity to testify on the Fiscal Year 2027 budget priorities. I am asking the committee to please appropriate \$15.6 million in FY2027 for the Farm and Forestry Operations Security Special Fund.

Climate change is an existential threat to small farms, which are not supported by federal crop insurance and disaster programs designed to support large agribusiness. My estimated losses between the heavy rainfall events in 2023 and 2024 was \$113,640. I hold NAP insurance- the only USDA program providing some degree of safety net for diversified vegetable producers- my combined payment for these two years of losses was \$3,035. The funds I received from the state's BEGAP program are what have kept my business going.

And agricultural businesses are key to keeping our state's economy going. Farmers and foresters steward 20% of Vermont's landbase and the effects of these working lands reach far beyond that 1.2 million acres. Our farms are at the base of Vermont's larger food system- which is home to 20.6% of Vermont's workforce¹ and our farms and forests are a lynchpin of Vermont's tourism economy- which represents another 10% of the state's workforce². I know you have many considerations before you. By appropriating \$15.6 million for the Farm and Forestry Operations Security Special Fund, you are securing the industry providing 30% of the state's employment, and as income tax is the largest revenue source for the state³, an investment in our farms and forests is an investment in the state itself.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ According to Vermont Farm to Plate Network

² According to Vermont's Agency of Commerce and Community Development

³ According to the Vermont Futures Project