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FY2027 Budget Testimony – Farm Security Fund

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of the Farm Security Fund Coalition's request.

I respectfully ask the Committee to please appropriate **\$15.6 million in FY2027 for the Farm and Forest Operations Security Special Fund.**

I have been working in Vermont agriculture for over ten years, closely engaging with farms across the state on issues of local food access and farm viability. Through this work, and now with American Farmland Trust across New England, I have seen firsthand how vulnerable Vermont farms are to climate-related disasters and how quickly a single event can threaten the future of a farm that has fed its community for generations.

American Farmland Trust is the nation's leading organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. Across New England and the country, AFT works directly with farmers and communities to strengthen farm viability and ensure agricultural lands can withstand the growing pressures of development, rising land costs, and climate impact

Our farmers' livelihoods depend on all of us supporting them through new climate realities.

I have seen apple orchards lose entire harvests because of late frosts. I have watched fields at the Intervale sit under five feet of water, resulting in complete loss of revenue and high-quality food for our community. I have seen hot summers cause blueberries to ripen faster than they can be picked. These are not rare events anymore — they are becoming part of the reality of farming in Vermont.

Farmers are the backbone of our state and ensure our resilience and viability as a broader community. Farming is an enormous economic risk for people who are deeply committed to caring for the earth, soil, plants, and fields that sustain us all. If we want people to continue farming in our region, they need to know that the State of Vermont will support

them when devastating economic losses occur, so they can continue caring for their families, paying their mortgages, and tending their land for generations to come.

The Farm Security Fund is one of the only tools Vermont has to respond quickly and directly when farms are in crisis. This funding is not simply assistance — it is an investment in the resilience of Vermont's food system, rural economy, and working landscape.

By supporting this request, Vermont can continue to be a leader in the region and nationally, showing that we are a state that builds local resilience and keeps farmers on the land.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to please appropriate **\$15.6 million in FY2027 for the Farm and Forest Operations Security Special Fund.**

Thank you for your consideration.