

Eli Hersh  
Honey Field Farm  
55 Butternut Road  
Norwich, Vermont 05055

My name is Eli Hersh and I run Honey Field Farm in Norwich VT with my partner Valerie and our team of local workers. I am representing my own views today but I also serve on the Policy Steering Committee for NOFA-VT. Thank you for providing me this opportunity to ask that you please appropriate \$15.6 million in FY2027 for the Farm and Forest Operations Security Special Fund. I also want to voice my support for Johanna Doren's request around local food purchases which have had a direct benefit to my own and many other farms.

Our family farm sells between half and three quarters of a million dollars of plants, produce and other farm products every season. We contribute over two thirds of this income directly into the local economy in the form of wages paid to local workers as well as products and services purchased from other local businesses. Farms are the backbone of our state's rural economy and the pride of our state's culture. By Vermont standards we are a medium scale farm, but compared to the large scale industrial farms that federal support programs are designed to assist, we are tiny. These programs and insurance policies create gaps that leave many Vermont farms vulnerable to the increasing volume of severe weather events. Young and beginning farmers are the most at risk as they are in the heavy debt start up period of their business. As a state, we can't afford to lose the next generation of growers who can't shoulder the financial risk involved in feeding their communities. S.60 will provide a safety net to support farms through the difficult process of cleaning up, rebuilding and re-planting after weather impacts, and that will make the difference for many farms between closing forever and rolling up our sleeves to try it again.

I appreciate you allowing me this opportunity to speak in support of this bill. I ask that you please consider my request to appropriate \$15.6 million in FY2027 for the Farm Security Fund.

Thank you for your time,  
Eli Hersh