

March 13, 2026

Dear Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

We, the undersigned organizations, community leaders, and businesses, write to express our strong support for the proposed \$500,000 investment in Rural Technical Assistance (TA). This request is not the creation of a new program; it is a continued and intentional improvement to Vermont's Technical Assistance system based on the Vermont Evaluation of Rural Technical Assistance (VERTA), and lessons learned from proven efforts such as Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP), Rural Economic Development Initiative, the Resilience Initiative for Vermont Empowerment and Recovery (RIVER) program and more. The Rural TA approach is a critical improvement for communities because it coordinates existing providers into a single, responsive system that helps rural towns navigate complexity, align with state priorities, and access the right expertise at the right time—avoiding duplication while strengthening what already works.

This investment offers a strong and measurable return for Vermont taxpayers. Rural TA focuses on early-stage capacity—project readiness, grant development, and coordinated support—where relatively modest investments can unlock millions in state, federal, and private funding that communities otherwise struggle to access. By helping towns move priority projects forward more efficiently, the program reduces costly delays, improves the success rate of public investments, and builds durable local capacity that persists beyond any single grant. In short, Rural TA is a high-leverage strategy that maximizes existing resources, accelerates community and economic development, and ensures Vermont's rural municipalities can fully participate in and benefit from statewide funding opportunities.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support this \$500,000 request.

Sincerely,

Mike Tecca, New Haven, **Harmony Cism**, Westford, **Kristen Getler**, Roxbury, **Adrienne Parker**, Vice Chair, Johnson Selectboard, **Diana Osborn**, Johnson, **Lyssa Papazian**, Historic Preservation Consulting; Discover Putney, **Jim Linville**, Town of Weston Selectboard, **Jeff Pratt**, Co-Chair, New Haven Housing Task Force, **Tracy Davidson**, Lunenburg-Gilman, **Jessica Simonds**, Lunenburg-Gilman, **June Bascom**, Greensboro Association, **Patty Eisenhour**, Chair, Londonderry Housing Commission, **Rebecca Sanborn Stone**, Principal, Community Workshop LLC, **Kord Scott** Selectboard Chair/Road Commissioner, Town of Windham, **Kristen Leahy**, Town of Hardwick, **Geoffrey Brown**, Weston Community Association, **Gregory Barlow**, Bradford Parks and Recreation Commission, **Ben Doyle**, President, Preservation Trust of Vermont, **Everett McGinley**, Cold Hollow to Canada, Inc., **Nicolas Storrellicastro**, City Manager, Barre, **Sherry Maher**, Meetinghouse Committee, Town of Athens, **Peggy Zimmer**, Westmore, **Stephen Brodeur**, Bridport, **Karen Horn**, Sole Proprietor, KB Horn LLC, **Helen Beattie**, Hardwick Neighbor to Neighbor, **Paul Warden**, Chair, Town of Johnson Selectboard (individual opinion), **Judith C. Kurtz**, Concord, **Michael Strait**, Town Manager, Brighton, **Leeann Wright**, Director of Northwest Career & Technical Center, **Pam Kennedy**, Westmore, **Jeanne Bright**, Northfield Community Center Task Force, **Cynthia Stuart**, Concord Community Leader & Local Consultant, Stuart Consulting, **Richard Shappy**, New Haven Housing Taskforce, **Gretchen Havreluk**, Municipal Consultant, Ingram & May, **Susan Stillinger**, Northfield-Norwich Partnership Task Force **Kathy Black**, Johnson, **Joe Kasprzak**, Town of St. Johnsbury



Vermont Council on Rural Development

Unleashing the power of Vermonters to create a better future