

Thanks for providing the opportunity to speak today. My name is Kara Fitzbeauchamp, and I live in Shrewsbury in Rutland County. I own and operate Evening Song Farm, a small diversified vegetable farm, growing 4 acres of certified organic vegetables for a 300-family CSA, several wholesale buyers, and a handful of charitable food community partners.

Today I am asking you to allocate \$15.6 million to fund S.60, the Farm and Forestry Operations Security Special Fund. \$15.6 million represents 50% of the average of the last 3 years' documented farm and forestry operations losses from extreme weather events. As extreme weather events increase in frequency and severity, it is essential that the Farm and Forestry Operations Security Special Fund has adequate money to meet the uncertain future and bring stability to our food shed. Supporting farms supports all Vermonters: Farms provide food, valuable ecosystem stewardship, and a working landscape that is an essential visual characteristic that drives our economic engine by welcoming over 15 million visitors annually. \$1 spent towards keeping a Vermont farm in operation after an extreme weather event, is many dollars back into the entire Vermont economy.

The Farm and Forestry Operations Security Special Fund is especially important to me, because I wish it was in place in 2011 when we lost our first farm to Tropical Storm Irene. That storm re-routed the Mill River through our farm, and created a rocky moonscape where there used to be 4 acres of vibrant vegetables in rich river valley soils, forcing us to rebuild in a new location a few miles away, out of the river valley. There was exactly \$0 available to a diversified vegetable farm from federal and state sources, despite trying every avenue that was suggested to us. Our entire fundraising and rebuilding efforts were funded by private grants, philanthropic donations from foundations, community crowd sourcing, and burning ourselves out. Despite being well insured, there was no insurance payment because the insurance landscape isn't designed for an erratic climate, and you cannot get soil insured. Not every farm has the capacity to become full time fundraisers after a disaster, nor should they: Farms are a collective necessity and allocating \$15.6 million to the Farm and Forestry Operations Security Fund is an essential piece for a resilient future food shed.