

Hello House Commerce Committee Members & Related Legislators,

I am writing to you to ask that you support the **base-funding of \$500,000** for the [Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative \(VOREC\) Community Grant Program](#) which is within the Dept. of Forest, Parks and Recreation. The FY27 Gov's Recommended Budget currently includes **one-time funding** for the VOREC grant program which is a proven tool to strengthen communities, grow local economies, and inspire stewardship of natural resources.

The VOREC grant program has a strong return on investment from \$11.2 million in 84 grants to businesses, organizations, and municipalities across all 14 counties since 2019. Through the VOREC Community Grant Program, my small Vermont-based planning firm was able to complete [the first statewide economic impact study of adaptive recreation in the country](#), focused on Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports. That study found that Vermont Adaptive alone generates \$10.3 million annually, supports 72 jobs, and contributes \$1.8 million in tax revenue in Vermont, and we estimate adaptive recreation overall may account for more than \$500 million of Vermont's \$2.1 billion outdoor recreation economy. Beyond daylighting these important numbers, this work helps ensure people with disabilities are finally represented in the data that drives funding and policy decisions. This study and other VOREC-funded projects we've been involved with have made it possible to enhance recreation for everyBODY in Vermont and elevate equity in our outdoor recreation spaces, which are incredibly noble goals I am proud to be a part of, but they have also helped me grow my small business from two to six employees (all but one of them Vermonters!). These folks are working on VOREC-funded projects here in Vermont but also projects in 10 other states, bringing dollars back home to the Green Mountains and acting as pollinators that help carry the recreation innovations we're discovering here to other places.

I urge you to fund VOREC this year and every year. This program has an incredible impact here in VT and helps to increase equity beyond our borders with its ripple effects.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Drew Pollak-Bruce, Burlington (Proud Old North Ender!!!), CRO Planning & Design