

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. Over the past cycle, more than **\$6 million in VOREC grants** have supported over 50 community-based outdoor recreation projects enhancing trails, ADA accessibility, downtown connections, and community resilience after flooding events. These projects have strengthened local economies, expanded access for all Vermonters, and demonstrated how strategic funding in outdoor recreation can produce measurable results. **Municipal parks and recreation departments are on the front lines** of providing safe, inclusive access to not just our trails, parks, & natural areas, but to athletic fields, swimming areas, senior centers, summer camp facilities, and various recreation programs. From organizing youth sports and senior fitness classes to maintaining trails and beach front facilities, our staff help Vermonters of all ages stay active, connect with nature, and build community.

**The future of Vermont's outdoor recreation economy depends on a strong municipal parks and recreation workforce**, long-term funding for community grants like VOREC, and legislative action that invests in people as much as in places. By supporting these priorities, we honor the Move Forward Together Vermont vision and empower local communities to thrive, strengthen our outdoor economy, and enhance the health and well-being of all Vermonters.

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,