

# **Working Lands Enterprise Initiative**

House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

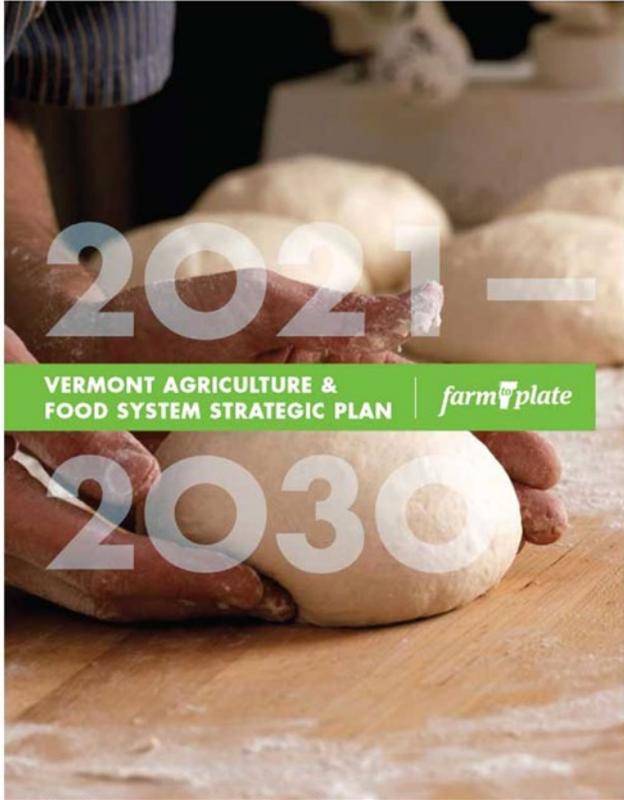
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Jake Claro – Farm to Plate Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

# WLEI is a Keystone Program to Supporting the Agricultural Economy and Achieving State Food System Goals

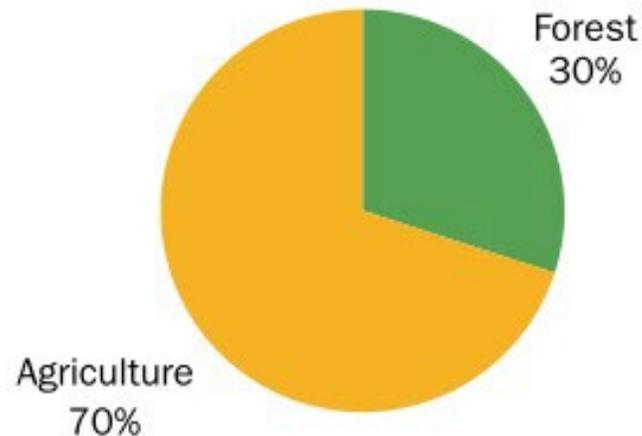
## Priority Strategies

1. Provide at least \$1.5 million in annual funding to the Working Lands Enterprise Fund. These grant funds are a unique and critical source of capital that accelerate innovation and sustainability in Vermont food system businesses. 1 3 6 8



# Increasing Base Funding Allows WLEI to Better Meet Investment Needs of Ag & Forestry, and Strategically Invest Across Scales of Business

## GRANT FUNDS TO AGRICULTURE AND FOREST BUSINESSES, 2012–2025



2025 was the first year since 2021 that the program operated with only the base funding and no special appropriations; this meant that supply chain grants, with awards of up to \$250,000, were not available in 2025. The maximum grant amount available for businesses in 2025 was \$50,000.



**Estimate of 3-year infrastructure investment needs across 5 industries:**

**Livestock Infrastructure Estimate:**  
\$58,800,000

**Dairy Infrastructure Estimate:**  
\$53,150,000

**Produce Infrastructure Estimate:**  
\$46,850,000

**Grains Infrastructure Estimate:**  
\$15,050,000

**Permanent Crops Infrastructure Estimate:**  
\$5,000,000



**Estimate of 3-year infrastructure investment needs across 5 industries:**

**Working Lands**

\$5.15 million awarded  
 \$27.5 million in requests

**Ag Dev Grant Program**

\$2.14 million awarded  
 \$43.8 million in requests

**Total 3 year Ag economic development grant awards vs requests:**

\$7.3 million  
 \$71.3 million

# WLEI is a Unique Source of Capital That Unlocks Other Types of Investment

