



Devon Neary, RRPC

Chair

Bill Colvin, BCRC

Vice-Chair

Charlie Baker, CCRPC

Secretary/Treasurer

February 14, 2025

Representative Michael Marcotte, Chair
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

FY 26 Appropriations requests from regional planning commissions

Dear Chair Marcotte:

Thank you for your past support in the work we do on behalf of the state and our municipalities related to planning, economic development, and flood recovery. The House Appropriations Committee will be seeking your input and priorities for developing the FY 26 budget and we wanted to reach out to you and ask for your support in that request.

Regional planning commissions have been called upon to do more and more for the state and our communities. The requests for our expertise cover a wider number of issues and have become more complex and are linked to many issues simultaneously. This is occurring at a time when municipal capacity has been under strain due to the overwhelming demands placed on them.

If Vermont is going to achieve its goals in housing development, natural resource protection, climate mitigation, permit reform, economic development among others, additional resources must be available. Here are our FY26 budget requests below in priority order.

1. **We ask for your support for the \$7,740,546 in RPC funding as proposed in the Governor's recommended budget (Sec. D.100(a)(3)(A)),** which includes a 3% increase in our funding consistent with State agencies.
2. **We ask for your support for the \$3,000,000 for the Municipal Technical Assistance Program as proposed in the Governor's recommended budget (Sec. B.1100(a)(3)).**
3. **We ask for your support for increased investment in brownfields by recommending a \$6,000,000 dollar appropriation for brownfields cleanup funding with \$2,000,000 of that total to be provided to the RPCs for assessment grant funds to make sure investments are spread across the State.** We do not believe that the \$2,000,000 for brownfield loan funding in the Governor's recommended budget (Sec. B.1100(o)(2)) is sufficient to address the housing needs in our communities. Here is the suggested budget bill wording:

Strengthening the Capability of Governments

(o) Department of Economic Development. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$250,000 General Fund for the Vermont Professionals of Color Network.

(2) ~~\$2,000,000 General Fund for the Brownfields Revitalization Fund~~

\$6,000,000 to be used in the same manner as the Brownfields Revitalization Fund established in 10 V.S.A. § 6654, except notwithstanding the grant limitations in 10 V.S.A. § 6654, projects supported by this appropriation shall not be limited to \$200,000 grants per parcel for remediation.

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall award the amount of \$2,000,000 in fiscal year 2026 to regional planning commissions for the purposes of brownfields assessment with no limitation on the amount that can be used for assessment per parcel. In awarding funds under this section, the Secretary, in consultation with VAPDA, shall select one regional planning commission to administer these funds. To ensure statewide availability, the selected regional planning commission shall subgrant to regional planning commissions with brownfield programs, with not more than \$24,000 of the funds being used for administrative purposes

4. **We ask for your support for the \$9,100,000 investment for the Vermont Infrastructure Sustainability Fund through the Vermont Bond Bank** for infrastructure in the Governor's recommended budget (Sec. B.1100(n)(2)) and other housing investments noting that there are significant needs for housing/infrastructure investments in our communities.

Please feel free to reach out if you need any clarification on our request. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,



Charlie Baker

Chair, VAPDA Government Relations Committee

Cc: Devon Neary, VAPDA Chair
Rebecca Ramos, Necrason Group