Water Quality Division – Water Quality Grants

For the House Committee on Corrections & Institutions

Nina Gage, Assistant Director, Division of Water Quality

VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM)

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Overview

- Division Overview
- Agricultural Water Quality Reporting Resources
- State Water Quality Goals & Progress
- AAFM Water Quality Grants
- Governor’s Proposed Capital Bill Adjustment FY27 Section 10 – Clean Water: VAAFM Water Quality Grants

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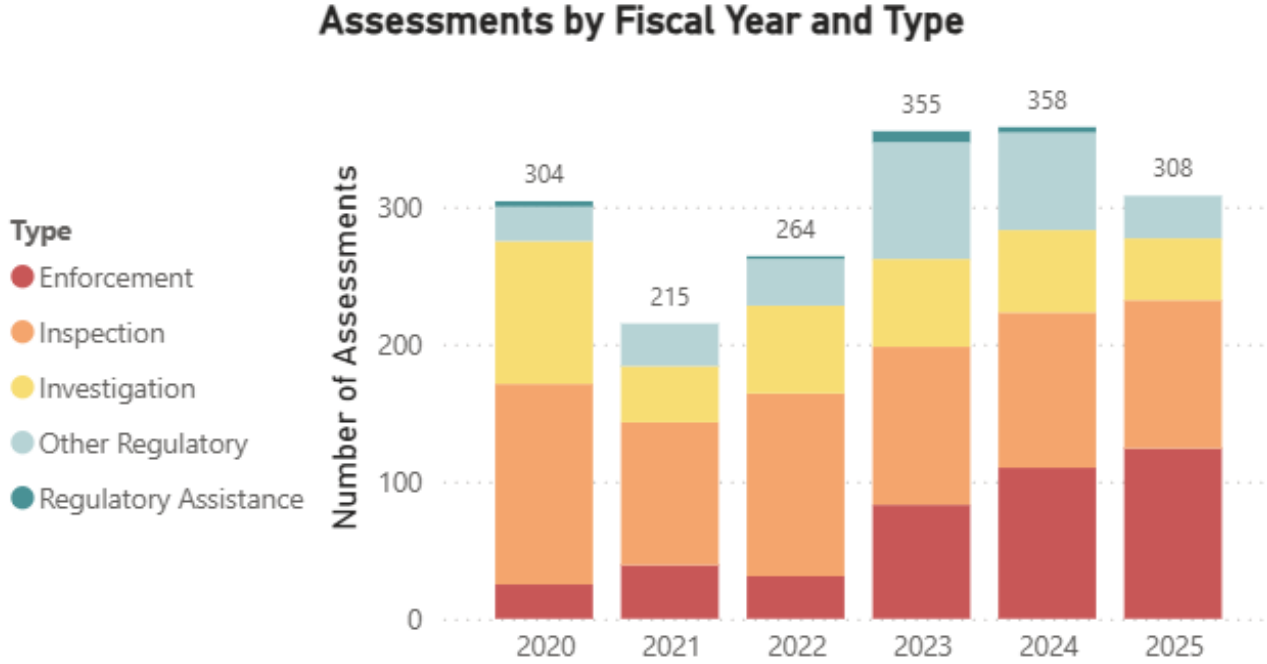
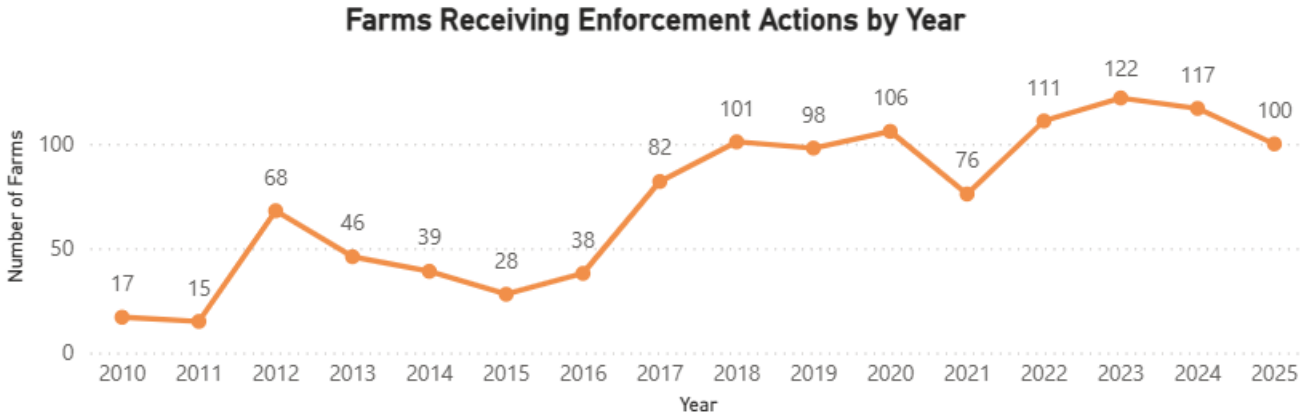
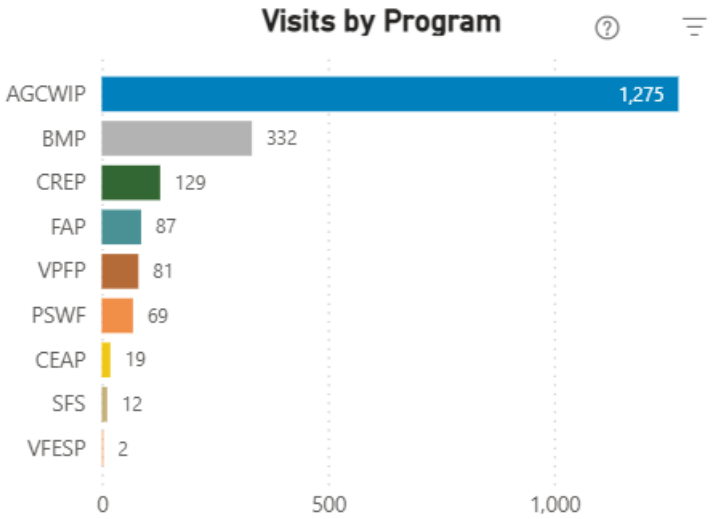
Inspection & Enforcement

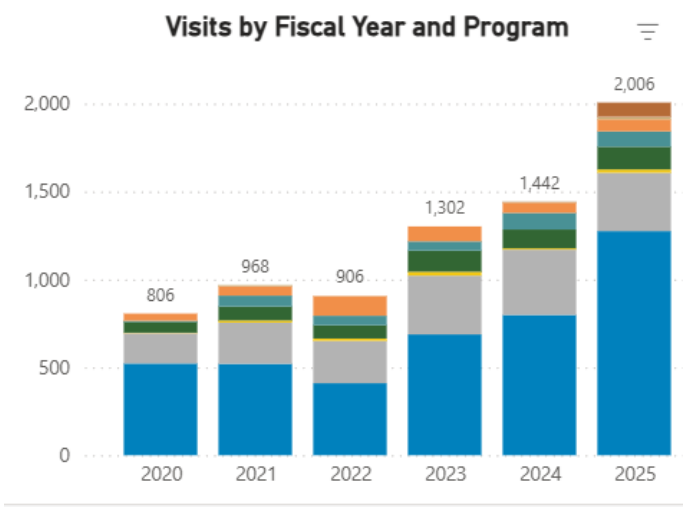




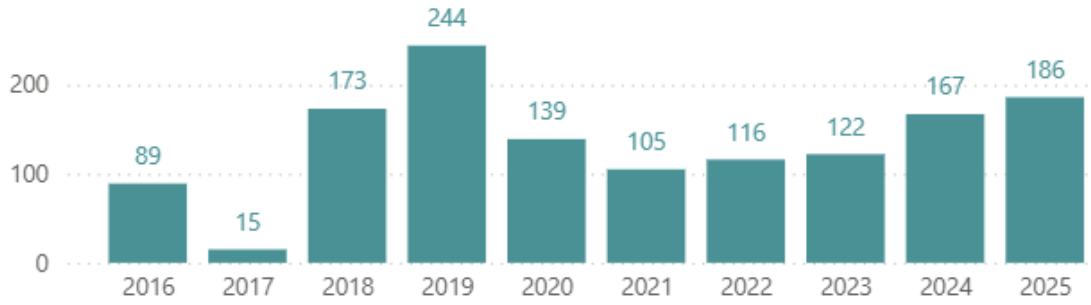
Technical Assistance & Education

Technical Assistance





Educational Events



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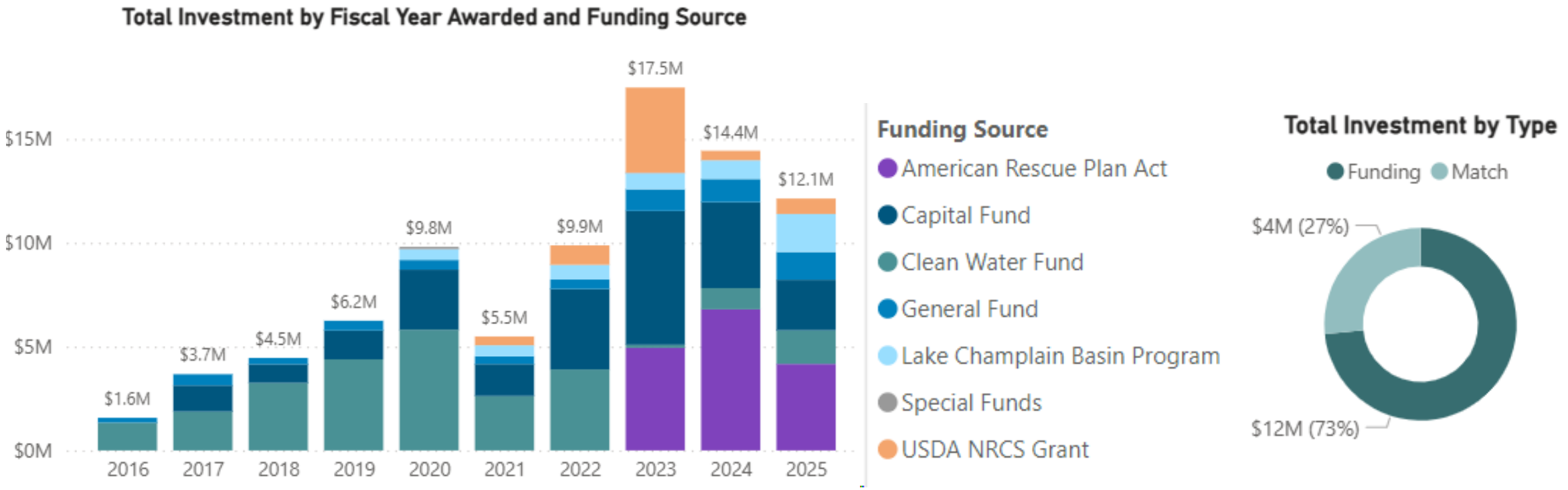
Financial Assistance



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Agricultural Water Quality Reporting

Photo of paddlers enjoying Lake Champlain.

Vermont Clean Water Initiative 2025 Performance Report

Published:
January 15, 2026

VERMONT CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE

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AGENCY OF ADMINISTRATION
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS
AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION

- FY2025 Annual Report on Agricultural Water Quality Financial and Technical Assistance
  - Water Quality Division - Interactive Data Report
- Report on Federal Funding Related to Water Quality Improvement Efforts in Vermont
- **Vermont Clean Water Initiative 2025 Performance Report**
  - Tactical Basin Plans Annual Interim Reports

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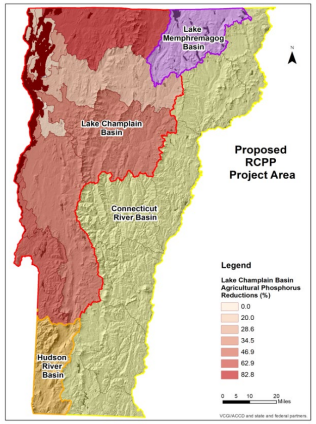
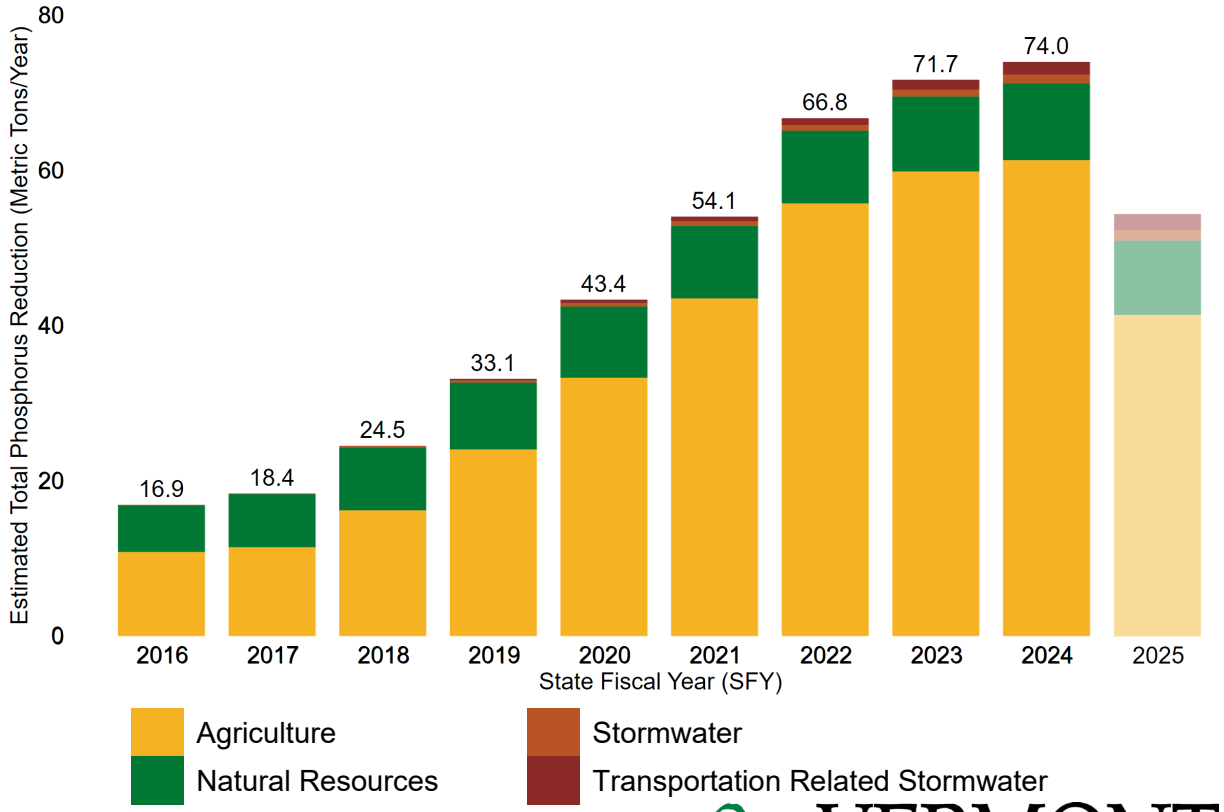
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Progress – Lake Champlain



Annual estimated total phosphorus load reductions (MT/year) associated with projects implemented through **state** and **federal** funding and **regulatory programs** in the Lake Champlain basin in effect during SFY 2016–2025 by land use sector.

Agricultural sector contributed 83% of the overall estimated reductions for SFY2024.



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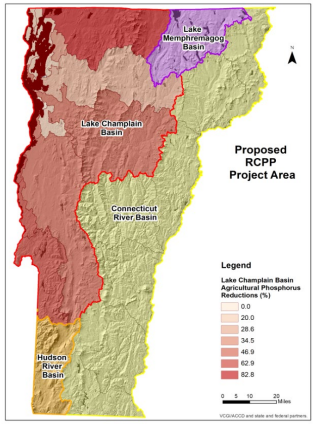
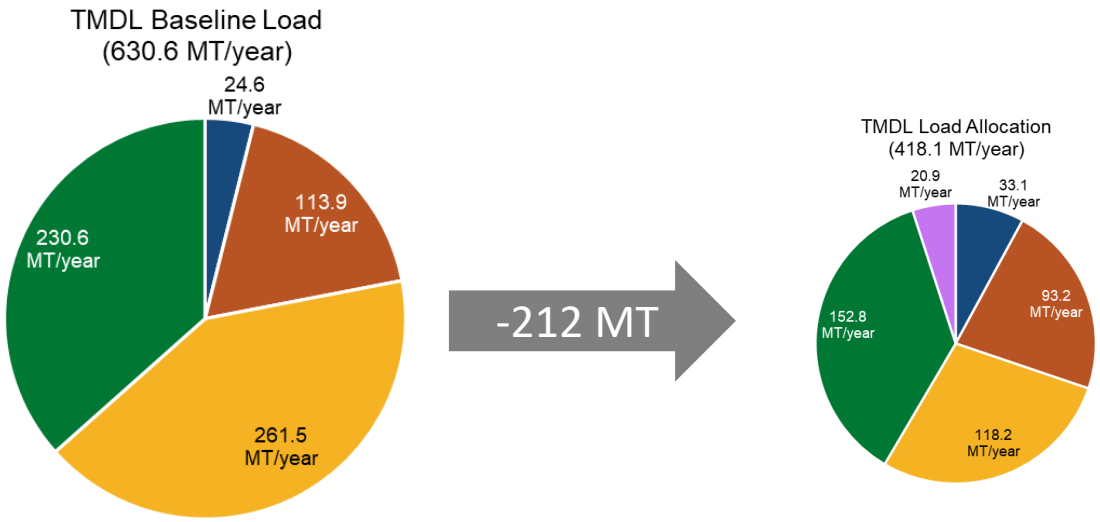
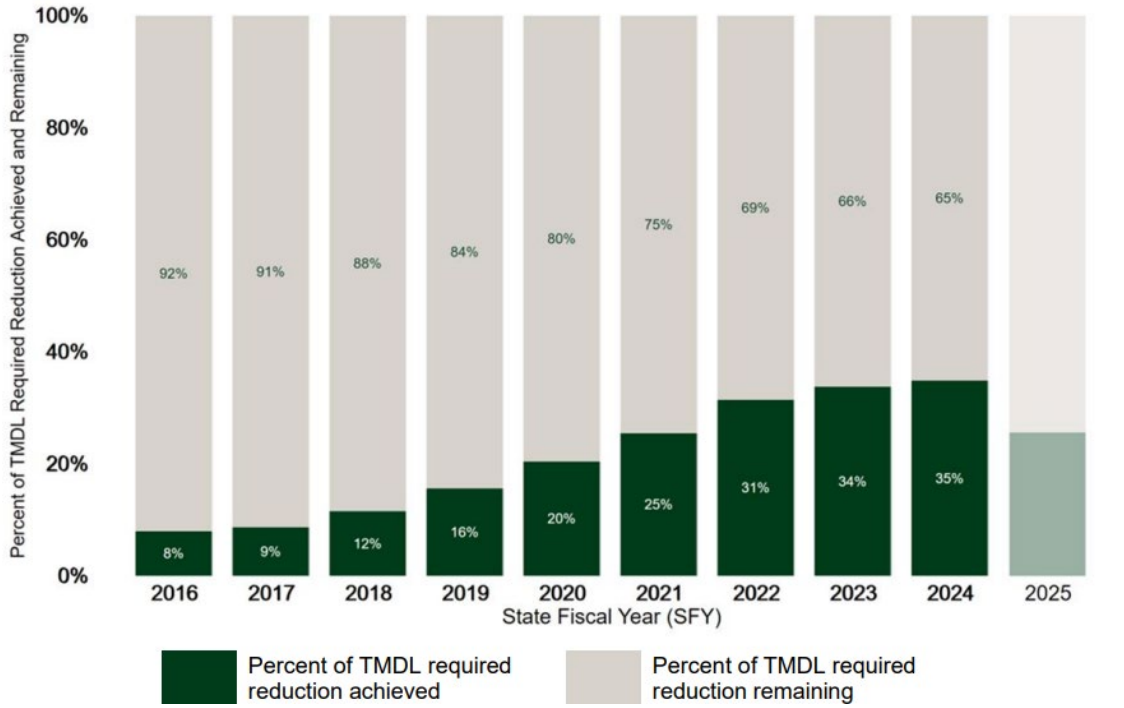
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Progress – Lake Champlain





Percent of required total estimated phosphorous load reduction (MT/year) achieved and remaining in each SFY 2016-2025



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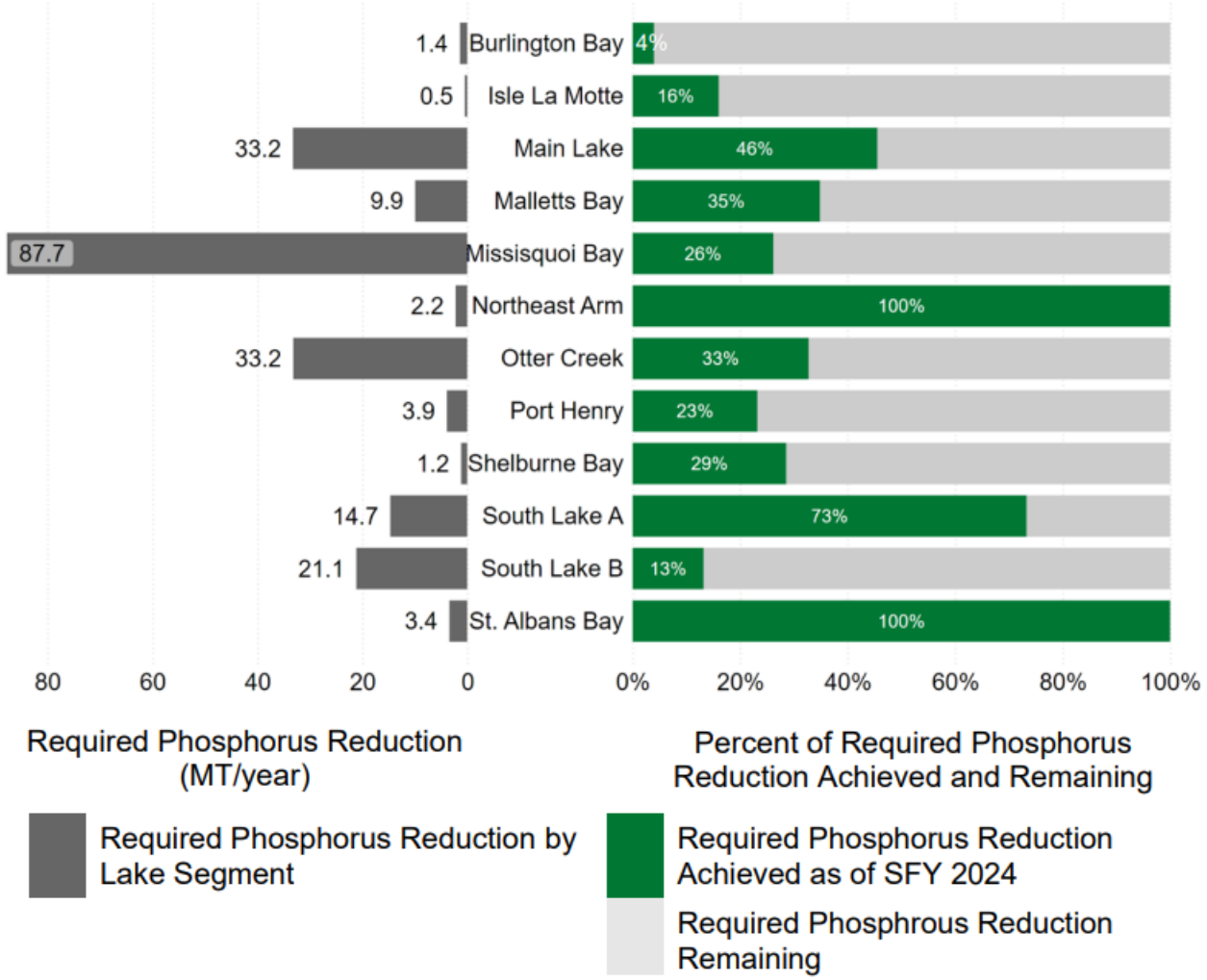
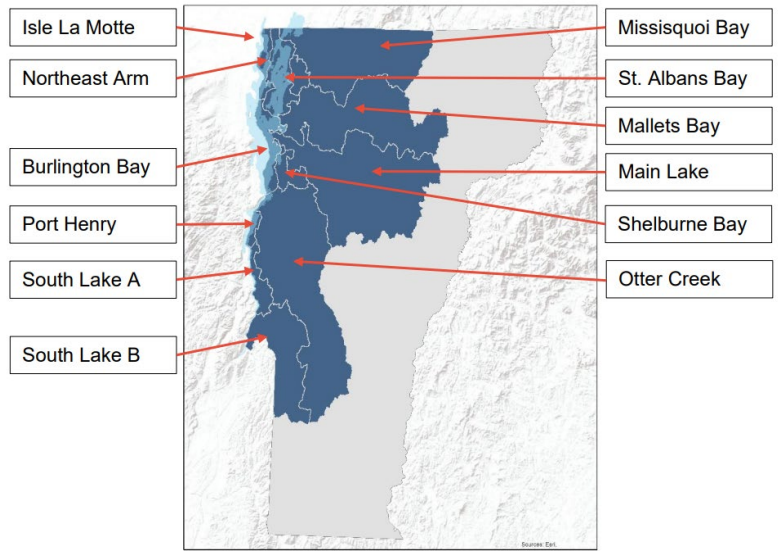
TMDL Progress by Lake Segment - Lake Champlain





Estimated total phosphorus load reductions in effect during SFY 2024 by lake segment watershed (right) compared to total phosphorus load reduction targets (left) in MT/year. Percent represents the proportion of estimated total phosphorus load reductions achieved as of SFY 2024 compared to the lake segment target reduction.

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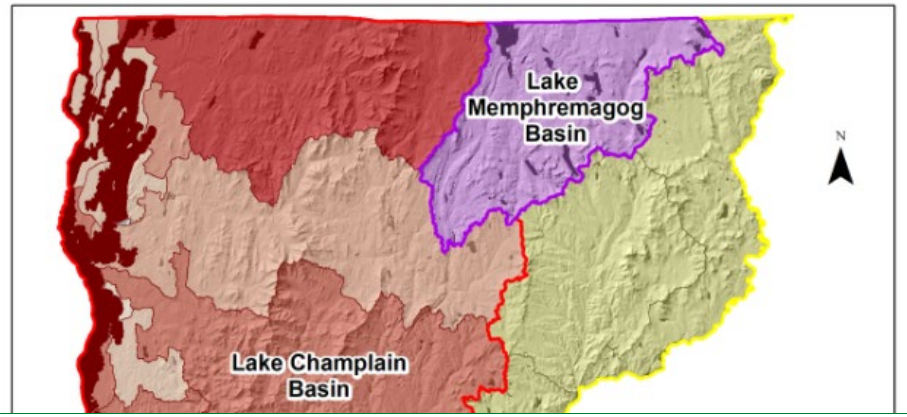
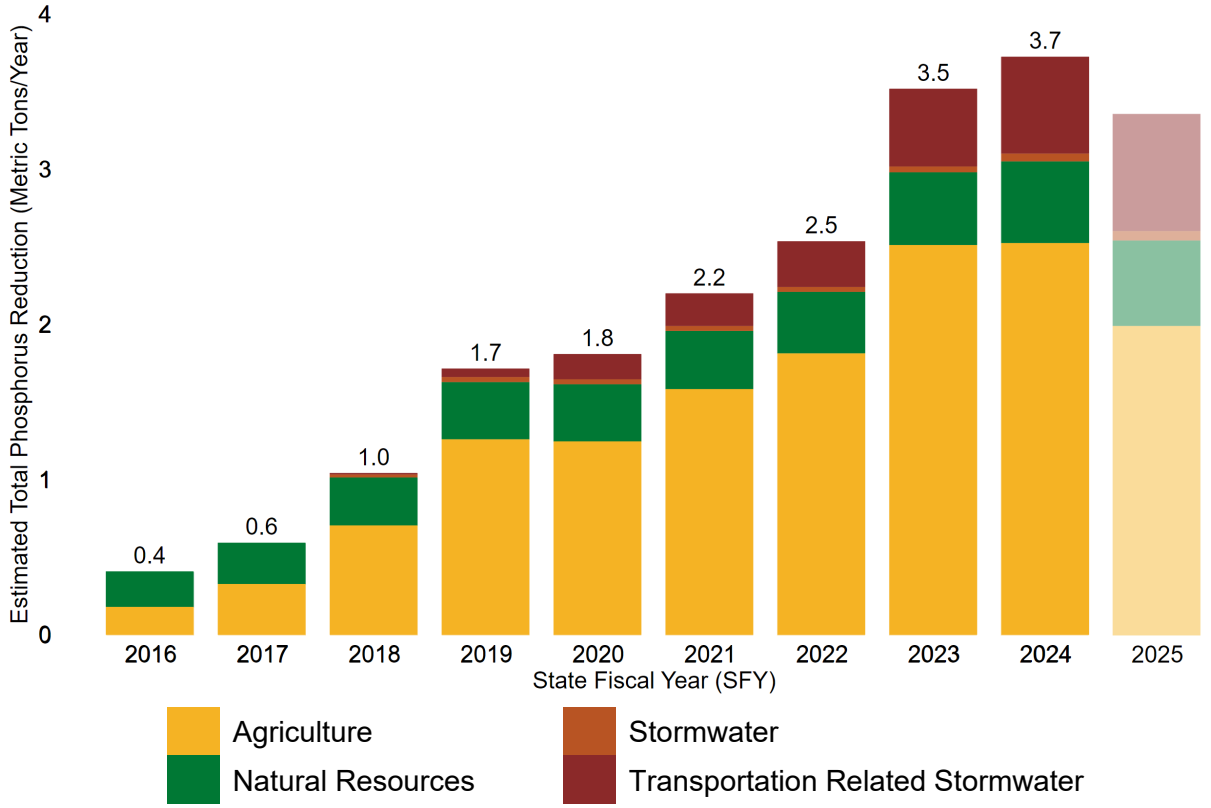
TMDL Progress – Lake Memphremagog



Annual estimated total phosphorus load reductions (MT/year) associated with projects implemented through state and federal funding and regulatory programs in the Lake Memphremagog basin in effect during SFY 2016–2025 by land use sector.

Agricultural sector contributed 68% of the overall estimated reductions for SFY2024.



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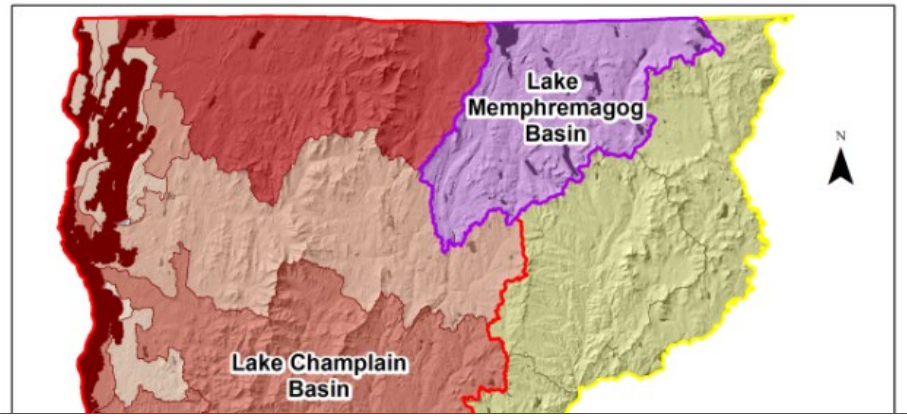
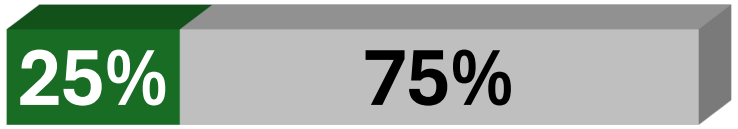
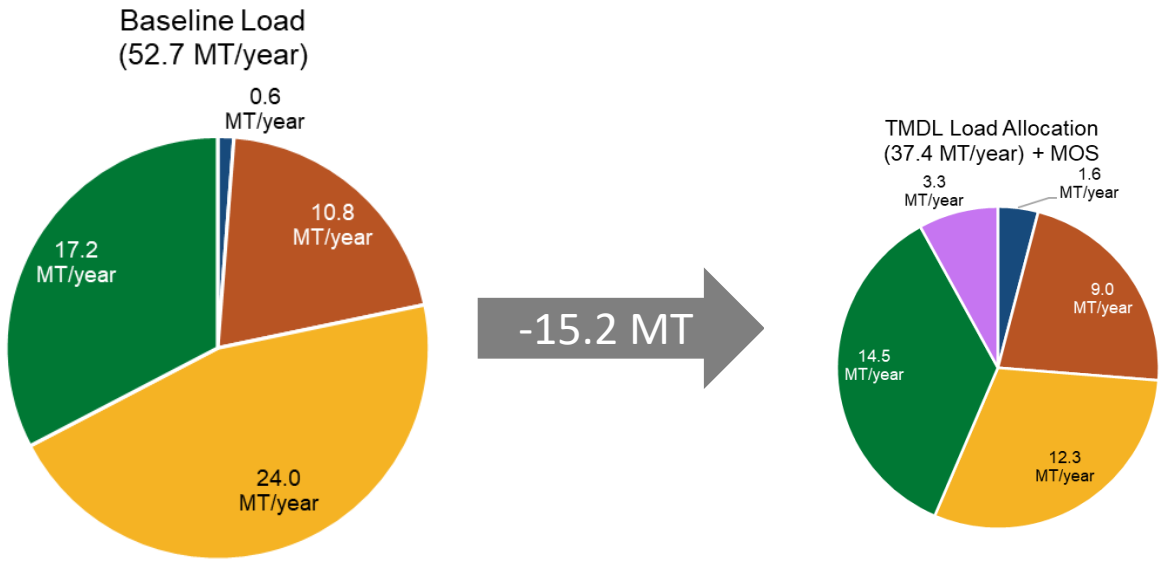
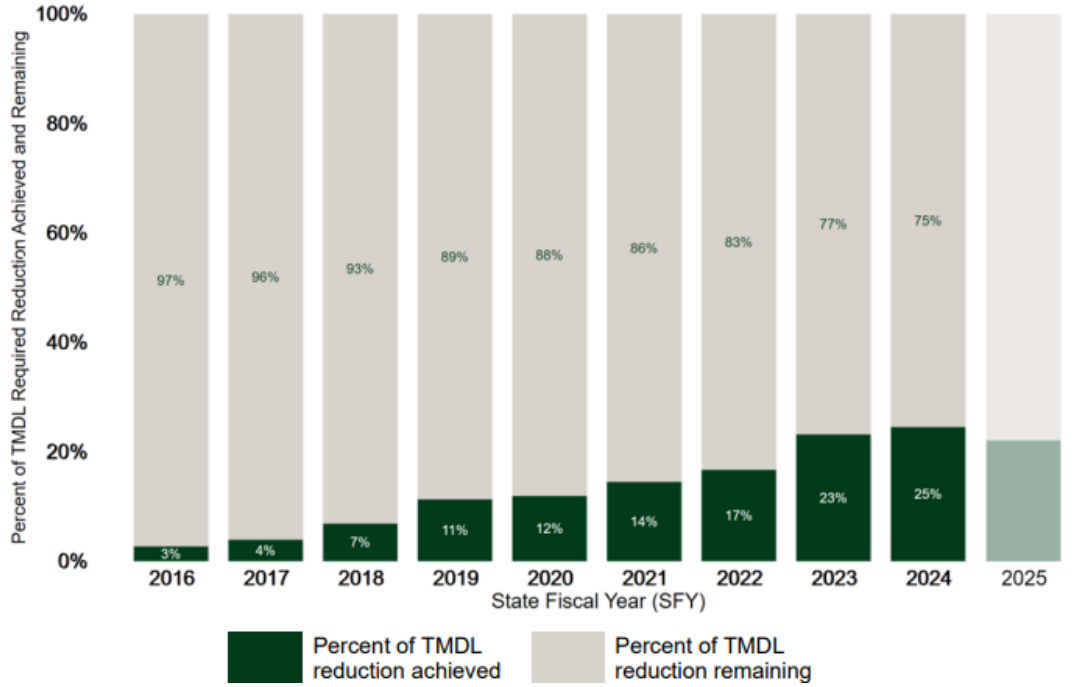
TMDL Progress – Lake Memphremagog







Percent of required Lake Memphremagog TMDL total estimated phosphorous load reduction (MT/year) achieved and remaining in each SFY 2016-2025.



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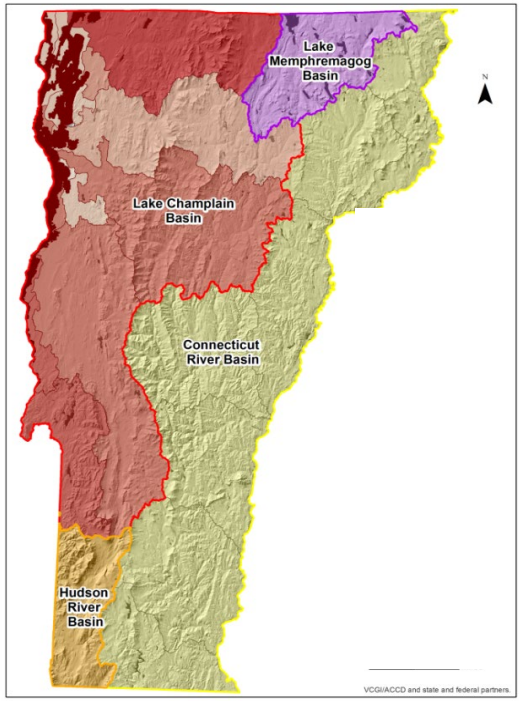
TMDL Progress – Long Island Sound

Under Development

- Nitrogen (N) reduction estimates dependent on the development of baseline loading rates and N reduction efficiencies for clean water projects in the Connecticut River Basin
- EPA efforts underway to develop consistent methods for all five states in the Long Island Sound drainage.



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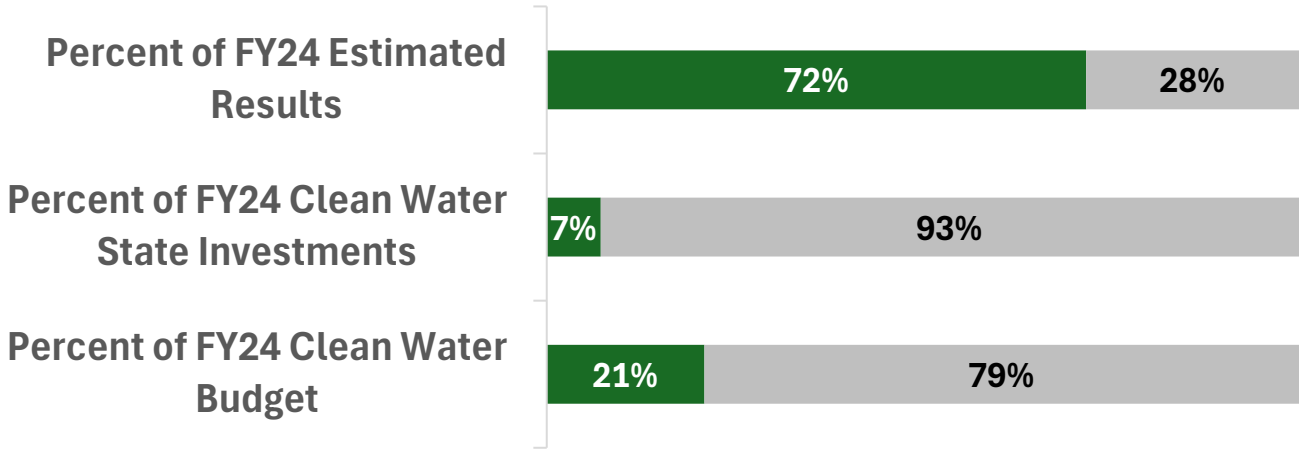
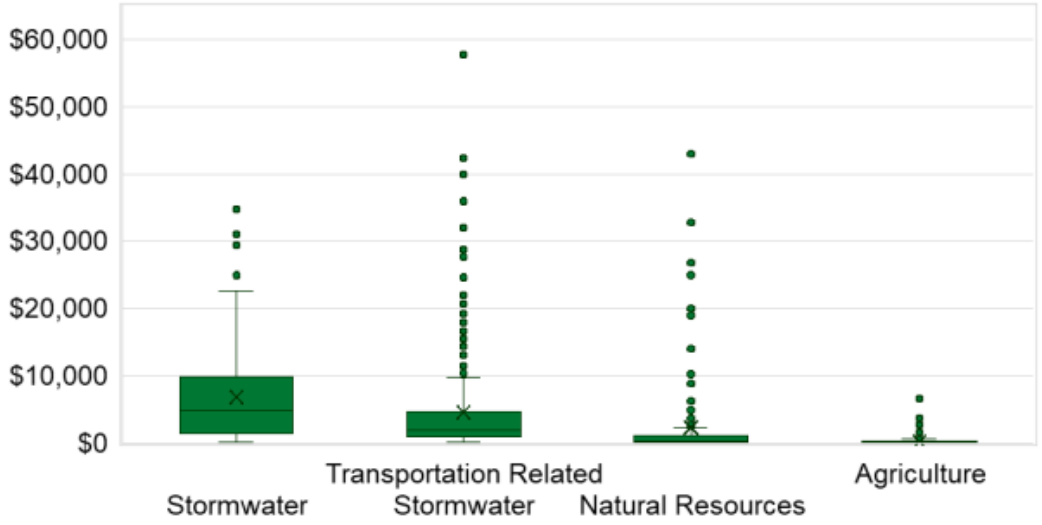
Water Quality Division Impacts on TMDL Progress – Lake Champlain & Lake Memphremagog





Dollars invested per estimated kilogram of total phosphorus load reduced over the lifespan of each project type, based on clean water projects funded through State of Vermont agencies completed in SFY 2016-2025

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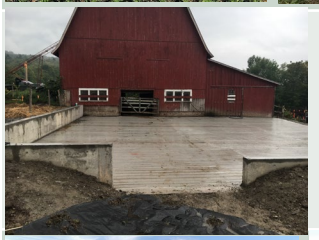
AAFM WQ Financial Assistance Programs

PROGRAM	PROGRAM FOCUS	
Farm Agronomic Practices Program **FAP**	Per acre payments for agronomic practices that improve soil quality and reduce runoff and erosion. Support for educational or instructional activities also available.	  
Best Management Practices Program **BMP**	Technical engineering consultations, financial assistance, and federal project cost assistance for structural on-farm improvements to protect or improve water quality.	 
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program **CREP**	Technical and financial assistance for removing land from agricultural production and establishing vegetative buffers.	  
Capital Equipment Assistance Program **CEAP**	Financial assistance for new or innovative equipment that will improve water quality, improve manure management, or decrease greenhouse gas emissions.	 
Seeding and Filter Strip Program **SFS**	Technical and financial assistance to address erosion and surface runoff through the establishment of perennially vegetated and harvestable filter strips, seedings, and grassed waterways.	 

AAFM WQ Financial Assistance Programs

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	
Pasture and Surface Water Fencing Program **PSWF**	Pasture management technical and financial assistance for livestock exclusion from surface waters and grazing system improvements.	 
Vermont Farmers Ecosystem Stewardship Program **VFESP**	Supplemental financial assistance to support farmers to enroll in the USDA-NRCS Conservation Stewardship program (CSP).	 
Vermont Pay for Performance Program **VPFP**	Innovative, performance-based program which provides financial compensation for reducing phosphorus (P) losses from farms.	 
Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Program **AGCWIP**	Funding for local and regional partners to improve water quality through education and outreach, technical assistance, organizational capacity development, and conservation practice surveys.	 

Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

(Left) Before the project, this access road was utilized to move manure to an uncollected stacking location. (Right) After, in the same location there is a new greywater runoff collection system and the installation of a gravel mortality stack pad.

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Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Before (left) and after (right) installation of a heavy use area protection BMP project on a small farm in Swanton, VT to reduce livestock impacts to the nearby Hungerford Brook tributary and provide an area that is more easily managed for livestock barnyard area.

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Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Before (left) and after (right) a barnyard improvement and cover was installed through the Best Management Practices (BMP) Program to reduce agricultural runoff to an adjacent stream from the farm's outdoor livestock area in the Connecticut River Watershed.

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BMP Program

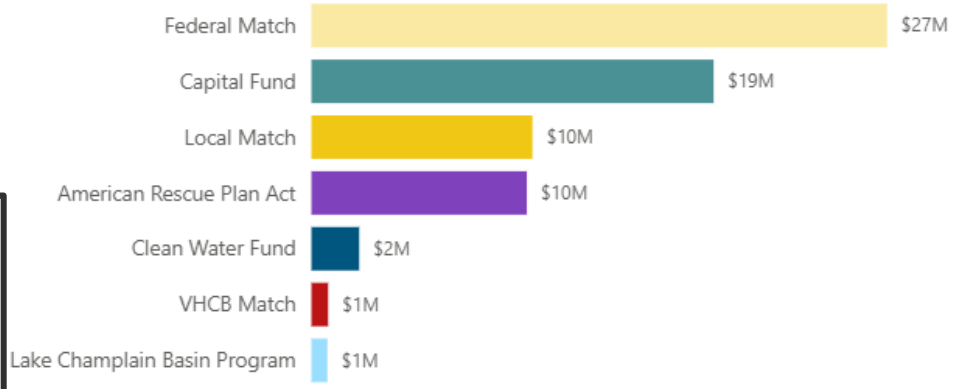
17.4 Months
Average project duration (SFY20-25)

$91,000
Average Payment Amount (SFY20-25)

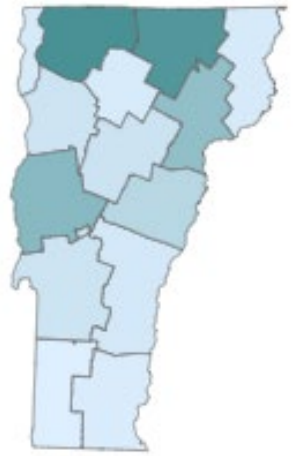
43 Projects
Average Per SFY (SFY20-25)

83% of USDA NRCS Farmstead Projects
Receive funding through BMP Program (average FFY22-24)

BMP Project Funding Sources FY16-FY25



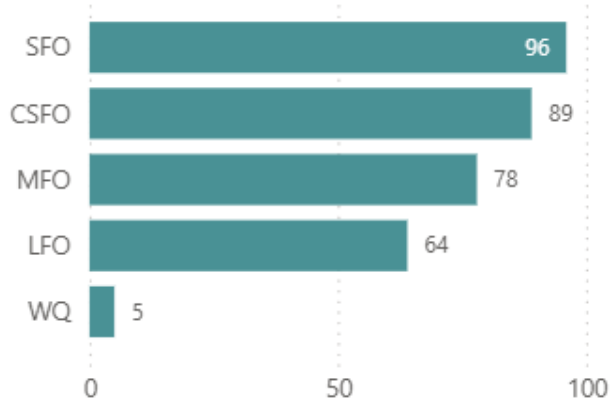
Investment by County FY16-25



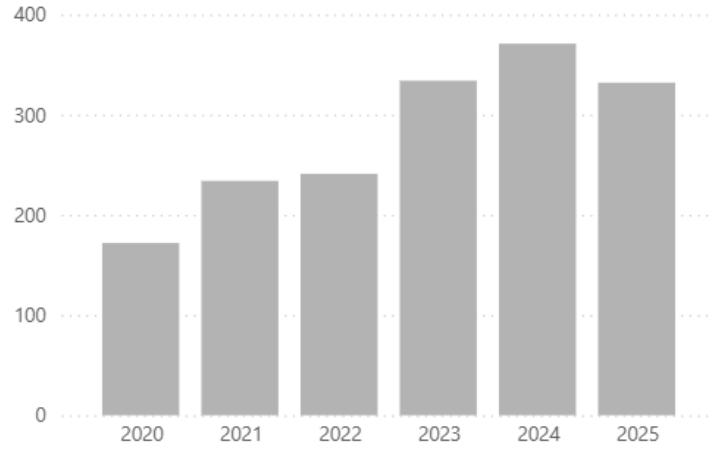
County	Percent	Investment
Addison	18%	$9,889,251
Bennington	1%	$342,805
Caledonia	9%	$5,061,813
Chittenden	6%	$3,256,711
Essex	1%	$393,110
Franklin	27%	$15,177,862
Grand Isle	1%	$628,529
Lamoille	2%	$1,106,414
Orange	7%	$3,811,127
Orleans	18%	$9,980,843
Rutland	3%	$1,787,951
Washington	3%	$1,925,507
Windham	1%	$719,663
Windsor	2%	$1,188,348

BMP Program Technical Assistance Visits

By Farm Size in SFY2025



Per Year SFY20-SFY25



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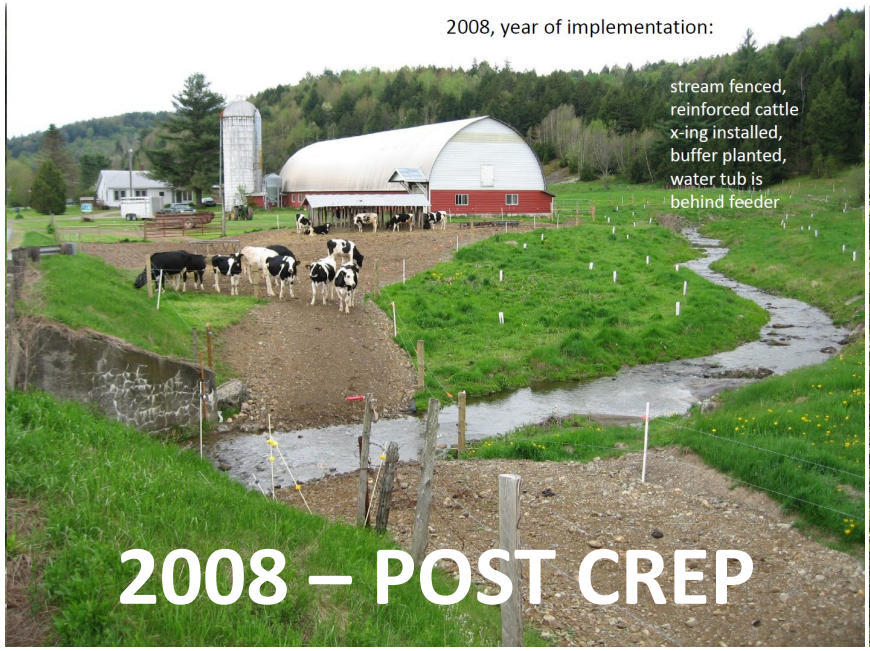

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Riparian area pre-restoration, post-restoration and 14 years after restoration through the CREP Program. Additonal conservation practices supported included livestock exclusion and fencing, a reinforced cattle crossing, riparian forest buffer planting and water source development for cows to replace stream access.

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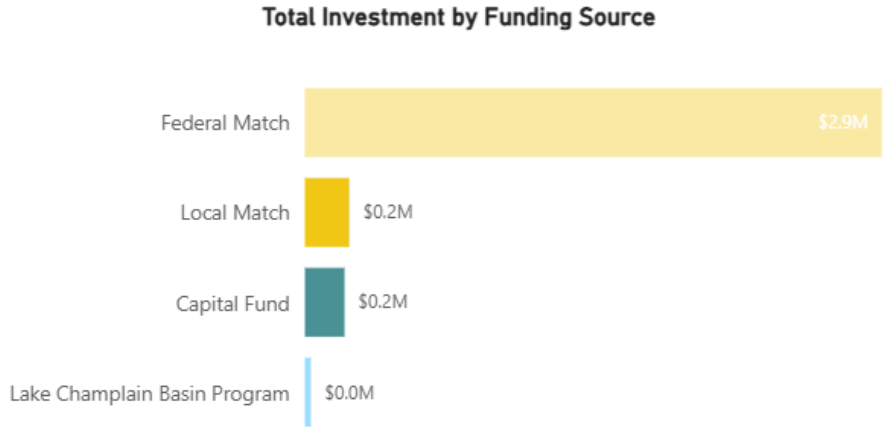
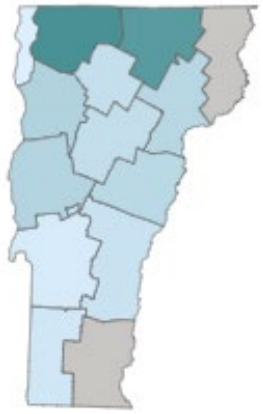
CREP Program

CREP Project Funding Sources FY16-FY25



Investment by County FY16-25



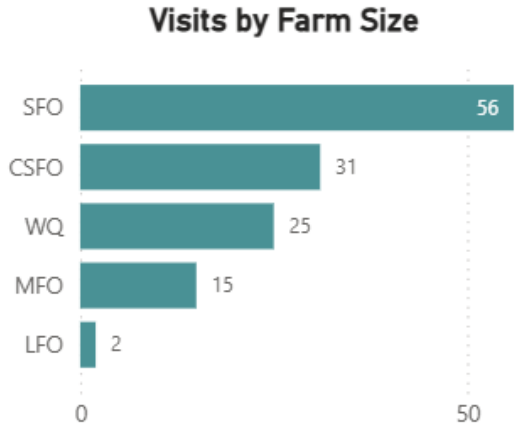
County	Percent	Investment
Addison	5%	$12,008
Bennington	3%	$6,610
Caledonia	10%	$22,293
Chittenden	8%	$19,250
Franklin	29%	$66,351
Grand Isle	0%	$816
Lamoille	6%	$13,459
Orange	4%	$9,748
Orleans	22%	$50,566
Rutland	1%	$1,222
Washington	8%	$18,959
Windsor	3%	$7,791

$4,200
Average Payment Amount (SFY20-25)

6.5 Projects
Average Per SFY (SFY20-25)

100% of USDA CRP Projects
Receive funding through CREP Program

BMP Program Technical Assistance Visits By Farm Size in SFY2025



Riparian Buffers Per Year SFY16-SFY25

Acres of New Riparian Forest Buffers	Fiscal Year
52	2016
40	2017
42	2018
35	2021
52	2022
49	2023
88	2024
28	2025

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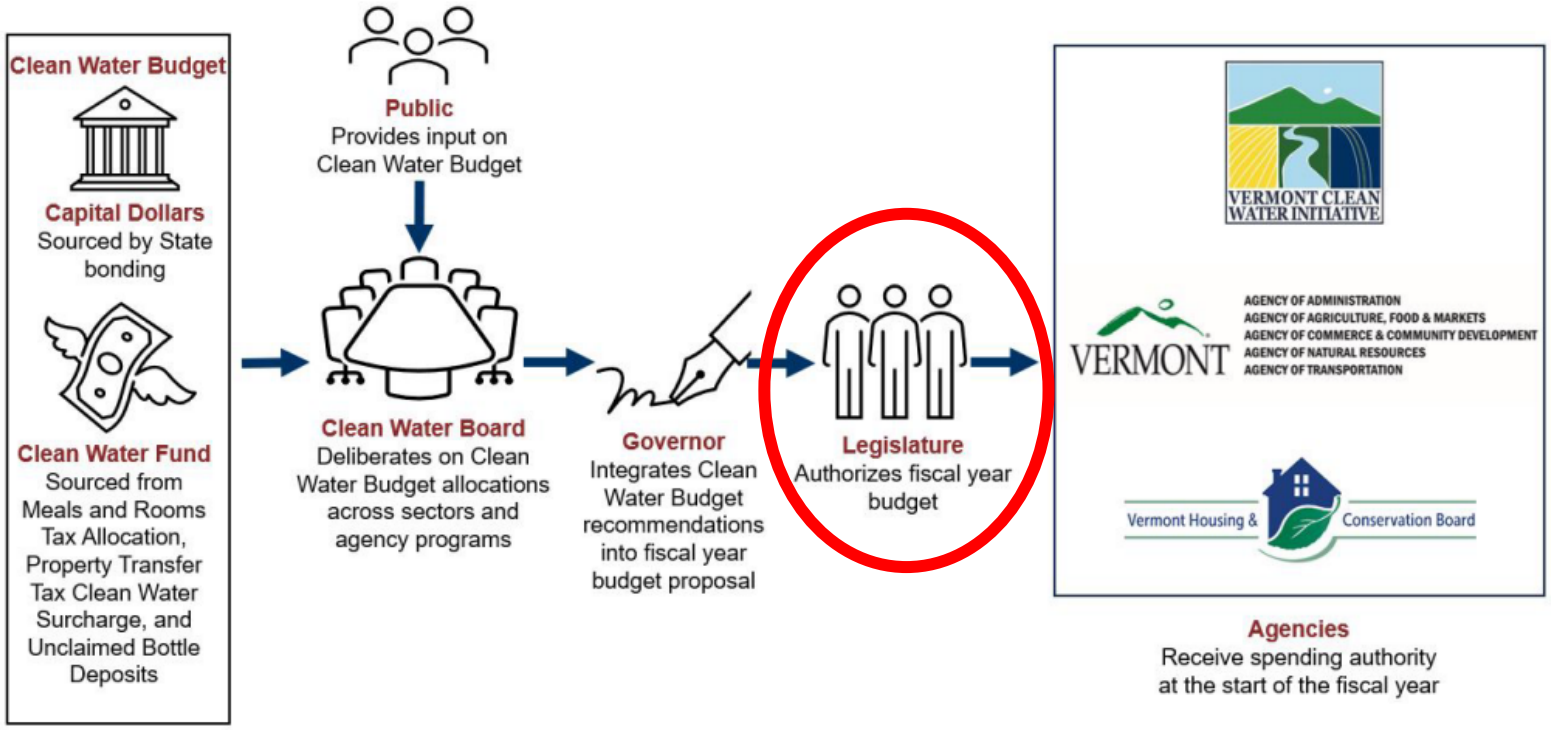
Clean Water Budget Process



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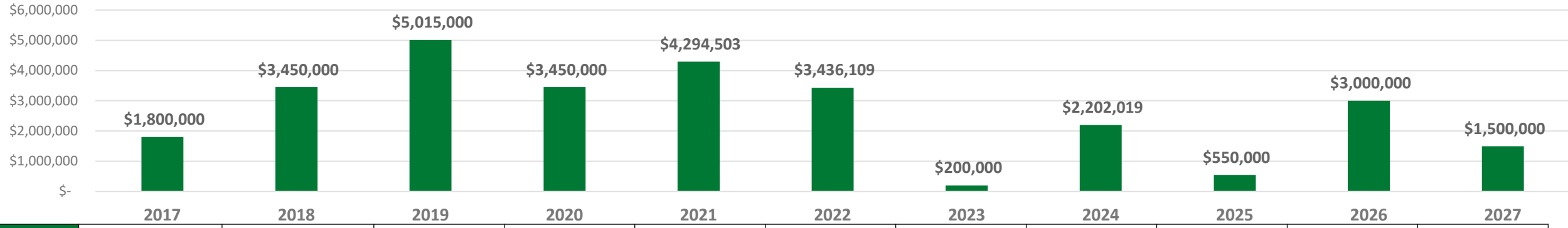
Governor's Recommended FY2027 Capital Bill Adjustment

Section 10: Clean Water

Agency/Department: Project Description	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
FY26-FY27 CAPITAL BUDGET	Act 33 As Passed					Governor's Recommend						
Agency/Department: Project Description	FY26	FY27	Total	FY26	Total	FY26	FY27	Total	FY26	FY27	Total	Total
Section 10: Clean Water												
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets						-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Water Quality Grants	3,000,000	-	3,000,000	-	3,000,000	3,000,000	1,500,000	4,500,000	-	-	-	4,500,000
Agency of Natural Resources - Department of Environmental Conservation									-	-	-	-
Clean Water State Revolving Fund - CWSRF	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,577,600	1,577,600	-	-	-	1,577,600
Municipal Pollution Control Grants	4,000,000	-	4,000,000	-	4,000,000	4,000,000	3,922,400	7,922,400	-	-	-	7,922,400
Agency of Natural Resources - Forest, Parks and Recreation									-	-	-	-
Forestry Access Road Water Quality Improvements	200,000	-	200,000	-	200,000	200,000	200,000	400,000	-	-	-	400,000
Vermont Housing and Conservation Board									-	-	-	-
Agricultural Water Quality Projects	800,000	-	800,000	-	800,000	800,000	800,000	1,600,000	-	-	-	1,600,000
Land Conservation and Water Quality Projects	2,000,000	-	2,000,000	-	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	4,000,000	-	-	-	4,000,000
									-	-	-	-
Clean Water FY 2027 Request		10,000,000	10,000,000		10,000,000		-	-	-	-	-	-
Clean Water	**10,000,000**	**10,000,000**	**20,000,000**	-	**20,000,000**	**10,000,000**	**10,000,000**	**20,000,000**	-	-	-	**20,000,000**
								-				



Appropriation Reference	Act 160 of 2016	Act 84 of 2017	Act 190 of 2018	Act 42 of 2019	Act 139 of 2020	Act 50 of 2021	Act 180 of 2022	Act 69 of 2023	Act 162 of 2024	Act 33 of 2025	

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From 2016 – 2025, Vermont agriculture has lost:

417 dairy farms

17,000 dairy cows

70,000 acres of cropland and pasture

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Source: 2022 USDA NASS Ag Census: Vermont; Table 1 & 8 : nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/Vermont/vtv1.pdf

Source: UVM Extension Vermont Dairy Update: https://www.uvm.edu/d10-files/documents/2026-01/January-2026-Dairy-Update.pdf

Thank You

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