

House of Representatives
House Committee on Environment

February 17, 2026

Dear Chair Scheu and House Committee on Appropriations,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment regarding the FY27 budget. Below please find our recommendations. We agree with the Governor's SFY27 Recommend of \$299.6 million for the Agency of Natural Resources (SO, DEC, DFW, and LURB). The ANR SFY27 budget includes an overall decrease of \$42.1 million (~12%) compared to FY26 due to the winding down of BIL/IIJA fund (ARPA). DFW does not anticipate significant federal reductions or grant eliminations in SFY27. Significant budget changes from SFY26 include:

- Increase in salaries, wages, and benefits of \$7M (+6.8%)
- Decrease in Contracted & 3rd Party Service of \$11.6M (-26.9%)
- Decrease in Internal Operations of \$6.5M (-12.7%)
- Decrease in grants of \$30.9M (-20.6%)

Additional Committee Recommendations:

Agency of Natural Resources Secretary's Office (SO)

- For the **Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program**, a top 10 priority in the 2025 Vermont Climate Action Plan, new base funding in the amount of \$500,000 for 2 new FTE's (\$300,000) and ongoing annual costs for platform maintenance and third-party verification.
- **\$336,200 in additional base funding for the Natural Resource Conservation Districts**, beyond the Governor's recommended **\$612,000**. This would provide a sufficient State share for operational funding at each district office (\$746,998), as well as resources for the statewide Natural Resources Conservation Council (\$74,200) and centralized administrative services (\$40,800).
- For **Serve Learn Earn**, **\$500,000** in addition to Governor's Recommend (total: \$1 million). This would restore the program to 50% of the funding that it was provided in SFY25.

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

- One-time funding in the amount of **\$200,000** to DEC to implement the initial stages of **S.218, Chloride Contamination Reduction Program**
- Base funding in the amount of **\$450,000** for 3 additional FTE's for the DEC Office of Water Programs for the timely **implementation of Act 121, the Flood Safety Act**
- **\$xx** in new base funding for the **Healthy Homes Initiative**

Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

? Carry forward total request of **\$651,525**:

- ? **\$54,550** - FY25 incurred cost that was obligated and encumbered but not paid by 6/30/25.
- ? **\$350,000** - Earmarked for two RFP's related to **Department financial restructuring** efforts for a fish culture evaluation and a benchmarking study.
- ? **\$246,975** - To cover upward pressure resulting from the **class RFR for law enforcement officers statewide**. Funds were appropriated through Section C.101 of Act 27 of 2025.

Further potential ANR budget savings could come from:

- ? There is **\$878k** of unspent one-time allocated funds from 2023 in the inefficient AERAP program that has completed it's pilot period having spent ~\$100k of the \$975k one-time allocation and only distributed \$5k to a total of 3 Vermonters in the 18mo pilot.
- ? There is **\$190k** carry over left from the Act 122 activity for evaluating the suitability of the Carbon Majors dataset, including its ability to support quantifying the contributions of major producers of global emissions.

Sincerely,

Your House Environment Committee